

*Just a*

PLACE BY  
THE RIVER



*by Robert M. Thornton*





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# Introduction

If the rocks and soil beneath our feet could just speak. What tales would they tell? Tales of ancient happenings only known to God. Tales of the present with a unique perspective? Of course, not all of our great planet has seen and experienced momentous history. And much that has is now buried under pavement and tall buildings, the objective of the tourist and the curious.

This book is about a place that has seen much, but now lies in obscurity and silence. It is an example of how nature, sooner or later, will reclaim its dominion over the best that man builds and admires. This place is not a single point in space, but rather an area, on the west side of the Rio Grande River in New Mexico, just north of *Mesa de la Contadera (Black Mesa)*. It has witnessed war, industrialization, community-building, disaster, and the birth of the atomic age. Its stones could tell much more history than this book can possibly comprehend. And yet, to the human eye, today it is little more than 50 acres of scrub and wasteland. A place that cars zip past on the nearby freeway and freight trains pass without stop at all hours of the night. A place whose story must be told, dedicated to all those who over the centuries have passed this way and found this *Place by the River* to be an oasis on the Spanish Trail, a place for which soldiers died, a place where a mighty railroad established its home base, and a place where all types of people, from ancient natives to Spanish colonists to American families called home.

## CREDITS

The information for this book comes from many sources, most of which are out of print. However, several such publications provided a large amount of information and I note them here:

**100 Years of Freemasonry in Hiram Lodge No. 13**

published in 1985 by the Lodge itself. Myndert Gilbert, David Lee Millis, and others.

**Horny Toad Man** by Lenore Dils, Boots and Saddle Press, published 1966

**New Mexico Magazine**, April 1961, Vol 39, No 4.

*"Forgotten Hero – the Saga of Captain Alexander McRae"* by George Fitzpatrick. pp 2-5

## PHOTO CREDITS

University of Arizona Special Collections – **Fred Harvey Collection**. Pages 61.2, 65 (By Permission)

**Socorro County Historical Society (SCHS) Archives**

<http://socorro-history.org/HISTORY/smarcial/pg.html>:

Pages 43, 73, 93, 99.1, 103, 106, 108.1, 108.2, 109.1, 109.2, 110.1, 111.2

**Crawford Family Photos** (Acquired from Estate by the Author): Pages 54.1, 63, 68, 80, 83.2, 85.1, 85.2, 91, 94, 95, 122.1, 122.2,

**Samuel Hanna PM and Family:** *Pages 86, 87*

**Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe RR:** *Pages 32, 33, 51.1, 51.2, 52, 53.1, 53.2, 78.1, 78.2, 90, 101, 123*

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**US Army** (National Archives) and Col E. Canby: *Pages 17, 21, 23, 28*

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**State of New Mexico:** *Pages 99.2, 104, 113, 114, 115.1, 115.2, 116, 119, 124.1*

**The United States Geological Survey (USGS):** *Page 35*

**Scott Weston** (Apush Exam Study Timeline): *Page 11*

**Armstrong Brothers** (Saloon): *Page 38.2*

**Dan Walker:** *Page 39*

**Dr. Shaw, PM and Family:** *Page 55.2*

**Evan Werkema:** *Page 129*

**Palatine Texas Herald:** July 17, 1945: *Page 120*

**True West Magazine:** *Page 13*

**Wikipedia:** *Page 3*

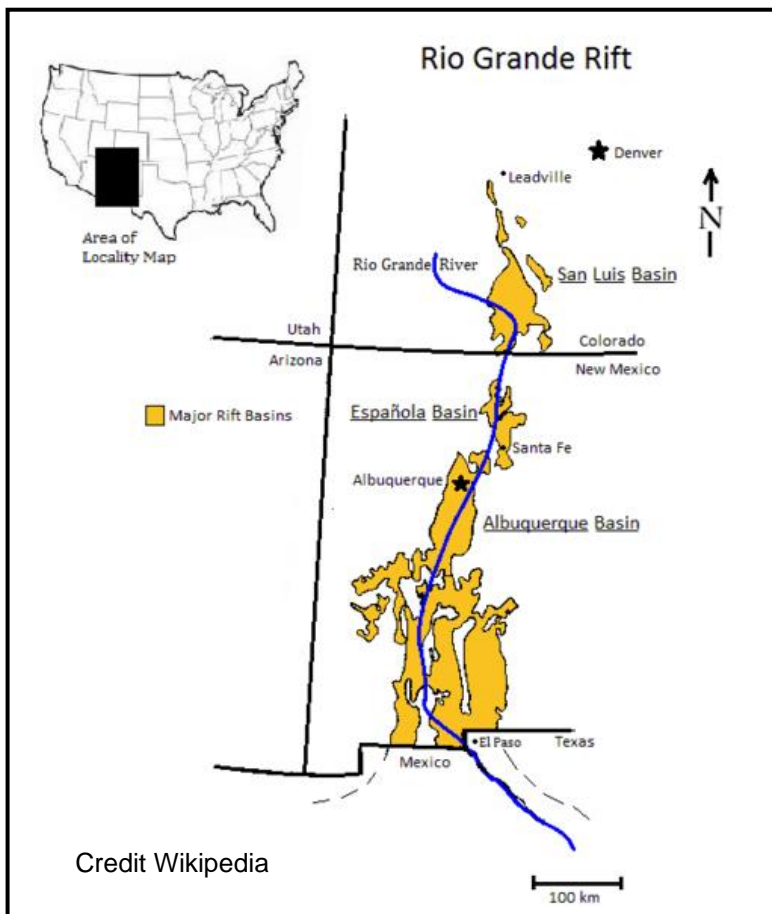


**...And to the other anonymous families of San Marcial whose candid photos documented their lives in these photos that, I hope, will give the reader a sense of this place they called Home.**

*(Pages: 36, 38.1, 41, 44.1, 44.2, 46, 48, 49, 54.2, 55.1  
71.1, 71.2, 72, 74, 75, 79.1, 79.2, 88, 92, 96, 98)*

All other photos by the author or noted on the image..

Before there was man, there was the River. And before the River was the Land. The Land's history was stormy, with volcanoes spewing vast amounts of dust and lava, huge inland seas that covered everything and then receded, mountain building and erosion that tore down mountains and left their sands scattered across the flat plains. And the land has not stayed still. For 66 million years it has “wandered” westward from the giant landmass of Pangaea to where it is today.



About 30 million years ago, a pair of fault lines ran almost parallel from north-south across what is now New Mexico. Then the land between the faults dropped downward and created what is now known as the Rio Grande Rift. The River that soon flowed down this rift started in the lands of Colorado and at first drained into great inland lakes. As recently as twenty thousand years ago, there were two large lakes east of the Rio Grande. One ran from approximately what is now Albuquerque to Socorro, the second from Socorro to near Alamogordo.

These lakes were filled by runoff from massive glaciers to the north. Ice ages have dominated the northern hemisphere for almost 90% of the last million years. During the present ice age, glaciers have advanced and retreated over 20 times, often blanketing North America with ice. The climate we know today is actually a warm interval between these many periods of glacier building. The last of the ice ages in human experience (often referred to as the Ice Age) reached its maximum roughly 20,000 years ago, and then gave way to warming. With the warming, the Rio Grande rose and began to fully flow into the Gulf of Mexico, and the great inland lakes disappeared. This warming occurred in two major steps, one about 14,000 years ago and the other about 11,500 years ago. However, between these two periods of rapid melting there was a pause in the warming, known as the *Younger Dryas* period. During the Younger Dryas the climate system went back into almost fully glacial conditions, after having offered balmy conditions for more than 1000 years. The reasons for these large swings in climate change are not yet well understood.

About 3 million years ago, a small volcano just to the east of the River, and at the same level as the River, erupted,

spilling out a flow of basaltic lava around its vent. The dark lava hardened and protected the terrace deposits below it so that they did not erode away from the wind and water like the unprotected lands around it. That flow, now elevated above its surroundings, overlooks our *Place by the River* and today is known of as *Mesa de la Contadera* or, in English, *Black Mesa*.

Today, the Land is still active. Most of New Mexico's historical seismicity has been concentrated in the Rio Grande Rift between Socorro and Albuquerque. About half of the earthquakes of intensity VI or greater (Modified Mercalli intensity) that occurred in the State between 1868 and 1973 were centered in this region.

## THE ARRIVAL OF MAN

Man probably first came upon our *Place by the River* about 13,000 years ago, during the Younger Dryas period. Humans of the Clovis culture covered much of the US, hunting mammoth and other big game using their distinctive spear points. This culture did not last long – only about 500 years, but was followed by other more localized cultures such as the Folsom tradition, which may have lasted only 700 years. Campsites of Folsom man have been found near the river in the Albuquerque area. The most commonly held perspective on the end of the Clovis culture is that a decline in the availability of the big game animals combined with an overall increase in a less mobile population, led to the creation of local tribal differentiation across the Americas. The transition from hunting mammoth to hunting smaller but quicker bison also played a hand in the type of weapons used. These cultures, whose most visible evidence comes from New Mexico, would have hunted near the big river as well as at smaller rivers and tributaries around the area. Note, however, these earliest known residents in the area are considered to be separate from the Native Americans who occupied it later.

The next peoples to come to this area, about 8000 BC, were nomadic hunter gatherers, and not big-game hunters like their predecessors. They traveled in small bands and would hunt small game and harvest wild foods near the River. Eventually they learned to do small scale cultivation and establish longer-term camps. As their lifestyle became less nomadic, the peoples of this area began to assume distinctly different cultures from the groups to their north and west. The *Mogollon* culture extended from its boundary with the *Anasazi* people in what is now mid-New Mexico in the north to southern

Chihuahua and from its boundary with the Hohokam people in Arizona to the area of the New Mexico/Texas border in the east. The Mogollon settled high-altitude desert areas. Although the Mogollon were, initially, foragers who augmented their subsistence efforts by farming, dependence on farming probably increased steadily after the start of the first millennium AD. Water control features are common among Mimbres sites, a part of the *Mogollon* culture, from the 10th through 12th centuries. Village sizes also increased through time and in the 11th century surface pueblos were common. However, by the mid-1400's, the *Mogollon* were gone from the area near our *Place on the River*, probably having resettled into what are now the Hopi and Zuni villages to the West.



Mogollon Pottery

## THE EARLY PUEBLO PEOPLES

At the time of the first Spanish to enter this area, the Piro Pueblo peoples occupied the areas of our *Place by the River*. They likely came down from the north and would be descended from the *Anasazi* culture rather than the *Mogollon* culture. The now extinct Piro language was in the family of the Tiwa languages. Native Indians lived in numerous small settlements of adobe houses and cultivated corn and others crops, did tanning and weaving, had established religions, and had an organized government. This lower Rio Grande region, termed the *Rio Abajo* region by the Spaniards and *paslápaane* or big river in the *Tiwa* tongue, was known for its floods since written records were kept in the early days of colonization. The majority of Indian pueblos were built away from the river or high on a bluff, which indicates these ancient occupants knew and respected the Rio Grande's unpredictable nature. Upstream from the pueblos near Black Mesa was a natural ford, important for travelers and villagers alike.

Today, Many Pueblo  
Communities are Little  
Changed from  
Traditional Practice



## ARRIVAL OF THE EUROPEANS

In 1581 three priests (Fray Juan de Santa Maria, Fray Francisco Lopez and Fray Agustin Rodriguez) and eight soldiers led by Francisco Sanchez Chamuscado left Santa Barbara (near Parral), reached the Rio Grande, and traveled 20 days along the river to an abandoned pueblo settlement near the natural ford and just below our *Place by the River*. They named it *San Felipe*. Through the years, the name changed but it was always considered to be the southern end of the *Rio Abajo*, or Lower River. According to archeologist Bandelier, who studied these ruins in the 1880's, the pueblos were known as Trenaquel, located on the west bank, and Qualacu (not to be confused with the Socorro pueblo) on the east bank of the Rio Grande. Other Piro pueblos in this area of New Mexico were at Socorro (Qualacu), then north between Socorro and Sabinal (Nueva Sevilla and San Juan Bautista) and near San Antonio (Teyepan, Senecú). Further inland, toward present day Mountainair, the mission San Gregorio de Abo was a mix of Piro and Tiguas. Tabira (Gran Quivara) was a Piro pueblo. However, all of these were abandoned prior to 1680 because of Apache and Comanche raids.

The Provincia de Nuevo Mexico began at La Toma del Rio, just south of El Paso where caravans crossed the Rio Grande. Although the first missionaries followed the river to the north, later travelers found an easier route into New Mexico. The Jornada del Muerto, which led northeast from El Paso, then east of the Organ Mountains, was easier to travel than along the Rio Grande with its vueltas (turns). The route returned to follow the river at a marsh below the plateau of Black Mesa, at our *Place by the River*. The Jornada was over 90 miles long. It was first taken by Juan de Oñate and his expedition in 1598. He, and others who



followed him, led carreta caravans with thousands of sheep, pigs, goats, cattle, mules and horses. Thus was established the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (the Royal Road of the Interior) which ran from Mexico City to Santa Fe. During the 300 year reign of the Spaniards, the northern end of the Jornada del Muerto (termed the "Journey of the Dead" because of its lack of water sources and blazing heat in the summer) was used as place of rest for the many wagon trains that traveled the Camino Real. All travelers welcomed the relief provided by this *Place by the River*.

The Spanish mission of San Antonio de Padua was built in Senecú in the 1620s. The Piro like most other Pueblo groups, suffered increasingly from the strains of Spanish colonial rule. Local rebellions broke out on several occasions in the 1660s and 70s, but the Spaniards always retained the upper hand. The mission survived for about half a century, but both the pueblo and the mission buildings were destroyed by Apache raiders on 23 January 1675. A Franciscan priest was killed during the raid. However, many Piro and Spaniards survived. The pueblo was resettled in November or December 1677 by reportedly over 100 Christian Indian families. It was once again abandoned during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 when many of the Piro followed the Spaniards south out of New Mexico. Some scattered and joined other Pueblo groups. But by this time, overall, the Piro communities had declined to such an extent that the famous rebellion essentially took place without them.

On Sept 6, 1680, Alonso Garcia, lieutenant of the Rio Abajo led over 1000 Spaniards in retreat across our *Place by the River* on their journey southward to El Paso. A short time later, these were followed by Governor Antonio Otermin and another 1000 Spaniards escaping from Santa

Fe and Rio Arriba areas and were accompanied by many more Indians from Isleta and the Piro pueblos. Both groups reached El Paso by mid-September and reunited. Apache raids on pueblos began as soon as Spaniards left. All pueblos south of Isleta and their missions were raided and destroyed by early December 1680.



The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 Resulted in the Tribes Overcoming European Settlers for one of the Few Times in Colonial History

From those who followed the retreating Spaniards, the people of Senecú and other pueblos settled in the El Paso district rather than return to New Mexico. They established Isleta del Sur and, later, Senecú del Sur.

In the summer of 1692, Dom Diego de Vargas marched up with a small army, passing by the empty pueblos of Rio Abajo. He took Santa Fe in mid-September and later recolonized New Mexico in 1694, but the Indians of Isleta del Sur and Senecú del Sur stayed in their new homes. The New Mexico Senecú and all the other Piro pueblos were never resettled by their original inhabitants after the Spanish re-conquest, and the Piro identity was lost. The pueblo's ruins near our *Place by the River* were visible to travelers throughout the 18th century, but they have not been seen since then and their locations are lost.

## **THE RISE OF THE PLAINS INDIANS**

After 1720, this area was claimed by the Jicarilla Apaches. How this came to be is another story with its own twists and turns.

During their colonial period prior to the Pueblo Revolt, the Spanish colonists in New Mexico used Indians as slaves and workers. These Indians learned about horses by working on Spanish ranches. The Spanish had laws that made it a crime for an Indian to own a horse or a gun. Still these Indians learned how to train and ride horses, and how to use horses to carry packs.

During the Pueblo Revolt, however, the Spanish were forced to leave so fast they left behind many horses. The Pueblo Indians took these horses and used them for their own purposes. While the Spanish were gone the Pueblo Indians raised large herds of horses. They began selling and trading them to other Indians such as the Kiowa and Comanche. The Pueblo Indians also taught the other Indian tribes how to ride and how to raise horses. By the time the Spanish came back in 1694, the horse had been adopted by both Pueblo and Plains Indians throughout much of the west.

The raising and use of horses spread across the Southern Plains quickly. The horse changed life very radically for the Plains Indians. Before they had horses, Plains Indians, including Texas Plains Indians, hunted buffalo on foot. However, buffalo are not easy to hunt on foot. They can run faster than a hunter can run after them. But with a horse, a hunter can chase after and overtake the buffalo. A group of hunters could now use their horses to ride up to a heard of buffalo and get close enough to shoot them with arrows before the buffalo had a chance to escape.

In a very short time Plains Indians learned to be expert riders. Along with hunting they learned to use the horses to make war and go on raids. They could go much farther than they ever could on foot and arrive rested and able to fight. The tribes who learned how to use horses first and fastest had a huge advantage over other tribes. They quickly pushed other tribes out of their former territories and expanded their territories. Tribes like the Comanche and Cheyenne who had horses and knew how to use them first pushed other tribes like the Apache, Wichita and Tonkawa south and west off the plains. The Apache who now live in New Mexico used to live in the Texas panhandle and north of Texas. However, as bands of Comanche warriors on horseback got more powerful, they drove the Jicarilla Apaches south and west, toward our *Place by the River*. Like all the Apache tribes, they eventually became expert horsemen too. So in the area around the river, Apache horseback raids permanently ended Pueblo Indian occupancy of the area and greatly



Compliments True West Magazine

curtailed occupation by Spanish colonists.

In fact, there were no Spanish settlements established in this area until about 1820, when the Apaches left for areas to the west, mostly in what is southeastern Arizona now. This was just before the time Mexico became independent. When the Apaches left, Don Pedro de Oscue y Armendaris petitioned for the Fray Cristobal Grant, the Valverde Grant and the Bosque de Apache Grant. Land Grants were for land that was vacant, unclaimed and within public domain. Private Grants were extended to citizens of distinction for military or other service. In 1820, Don Pedro got a grant for the land on the west side of the river opposite Valverde, an area that eventually included Fort Craig, Old Town San Marcial and New Town San Marcial.

Don Pedro started the town of Valverde and sold it to Don Francisco Xavier Chavez in 1823. Navajos attacked the town in 1825 and destroyed the farms. Later, when the United States took possession of New Mexico, Don Pedro fled to Chihuahua fearing he would lose all his land claims. Before he left, he deeded 4000 acres on the opposite side of the river from the ruins of Valverde (west side) to Hugh Smith and Thomas Biggs under condition they would defend his other land claims. Ironically, the Armendaris Grants were confirmed by the US Congress in 1860 and Don Pedro's fears were unfounded.

## ARRIVAL OF THE AMERICANS

In 1848, the Anglo appeared on the scene in the form of military troops. The Army of the West had peacefully taken possession of New Mexico and, like all intruders before them, were experiencing problems with the Indians. Prior to departing for service in Major Colonel Alexander Doniphan's 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, (the) Missouri Mounted Volunteers were detailed to mount a campaign against the Navajos who were raiding and holding control over the areas formerly occupied by the Apaches. Three detachments were sent out from Santa Fe to scout different sections of the Navajo country with instructions to impress upon the Indians the Americans' desire for peace, after which they were to rendezvous at Valverde. On December 12, 1846, the Regiment was reunited and following a short rest they commenced their march south to join General Wood's command at Chihuahua. This was, thus, the first large gathering of Americans in the vicinity of our *Place by the River*.

After the Mexican War had been successfully concluded, military forces returned to the area where they had bivouacked earlier and established Fort Conrad – a semi-permanent installation at the northern extremity of the dreaded *Jornada del Muerto*, west of the Rio Grande and about 30 miles south of present day Socorro. Ft Conrad was built in 1851 but was on private land and in a low marshy place. Malaria was common in the fort.

In a report on new posts established in New Mexico, written in the latter part of 1851, Colonel Edwin Y. Sumner, Commander, Military Department No. 9 (which was the Department of New Mexico) advised the Adjutant-General in Washington that the military bases were "selected with a view to cultivation as well as the defense of the frontier..."

An Inspector-General visited Fort Conrad in September 1853, and found it by strategic standards to have been poorly located, for cultivation a distinct failure, the temporary buildings constructed of cottonwood poles and adobes wholly inadequate, and of paramount concern was that it was constructed on land that did not belong to the Government. It was his recommendation that Fort Conrad be abandoned.

On the west bank of the Rio Grande, on 400 acres leased from the Armendariz land grant on an isolated bluff overlooking the great river, the soldiers from Fort Conrad labored to build a military post to take the place of their condemned home. In the desolation of southern Socorro County, nine miles south of the old post and occupying a site baked by the hot sun and buffeted by the winds sweeping down the slopes of the distant San Mateo Mountains, a new fort was formed from native materials of wood and adobe in typical frontier fashion. Up from the soil rose the scattered barracks, stables and support buildings, all safely entrenched behind fortified casements. The troops moved there on March 31, 1854, and in honor of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Louis S. Craig, the new post was named Fort Craig. Colonel Craig, a regular army officer who had distinguished himself in the Mexican War, was murdered on June 6, 1852 by a band of deserters from Fort Yuma, California, while he was providing escort for the United States Boundary Commission. Today the ruins of Ft Craig have become a popular site for history buffs to visit; however, nothing remains of Ft Conrad and its exact location is unknown.

Fort Craig was an important link in the chain of military posts extending down the Rio Grande Valley from Santa Fe. Its primary mission was to subdue the marauding

Navajos and Apaches. The fort was probably the best garrisoned military post in the Southwest with a capacity for four thousand men, a hospital, officer quarters and enlisted barracks, stores, storehouses, and a commissary. The fort's infantry and cavalry companies conducted numerous sorties against warriors of the two tribes. Barracks life for the garrison was Spartan at best throughout most of its duration. Water then, as now, was a precious commodity. It was laboriously hauled from the river below and stored in barrels at various locations within the post. Because of the water situation, personal hygiene for the troops was itself a struggle; almost as vigorous as the battles waged against the Indians. An 1870 inspection report had this to say about the soldiers' efforts to keep clean: "the men use the river during the hot months, at their own discretion. In the cold months the wash tubs of the laundresses are used for that purpose."



Fort Craig was One of the Largest Constructed in the West and  
was Primarily Intended for Indian Control

However, the officers had far better conditions, not only in the camp but nearby. In 1858, Col Stapleton bought Hugh Smith's share of the 4000 acres originally owned by Don Pedro to start the Stapleton Ranch, a place that became the favorite retreat for the officers of Ft Craig. Needless to say, it had better bath and other comfort conditions than could be found inside the fort.



## THE BATTLE OF VALVERDE

In mid-1861, Henry Hopkins Sibley, a major of cavalry stationed at Fort Union, near Las Vegas, resigned his federal commission to follow his native state of Louisiana into the Confederate ranks. Sibley traveled to Richmond, Va., where he won the support of President Jefferson Davis for an ambitious plan to conquer the New Mexico Territory (which in 1861 included latter day Arizona), Colorado and California. With a commission as brigadier general in the Confederate Army, former major Sibley set up headquarters in San Antonio, Texas, to recruit and train three regiments of cavalry — about 3,500 men. He also raised a force of infantry regiments and a light artillery unit, a total of almost seven thousand men, and began the march from San Antonio to El Paso in November 1861. On December 20, 1861, Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley issued a proclamation claiming New Mexico for the Confederacy. To support his words, he advanced north from Fort Thorn in February 1862. Following the Rio Grande he intended to take Fort Craig, the capital at Santa Fe, and then Fort Union.

Meanwhile, when the American Civil War began in April 1861, Kit Carson resigned his post as federal Indian agent for northern New Mexico and joined the New Mexico volunteer infantry which was being organized by Ceran St. Vrain. Although originally the New Mexico Territory allowed slavery, geography and economics made the institution so impractical that there were only a handful of slaves within its boundaries. The territorial government and the leaders of opinion all threw their support to the Union. Well aware of Confederate military intentions, the N.M. Territorial Legislature in Santa Fe passed the War Powers Act on Jan. 25, 1862, *"to repulse and drive from our soil the now*

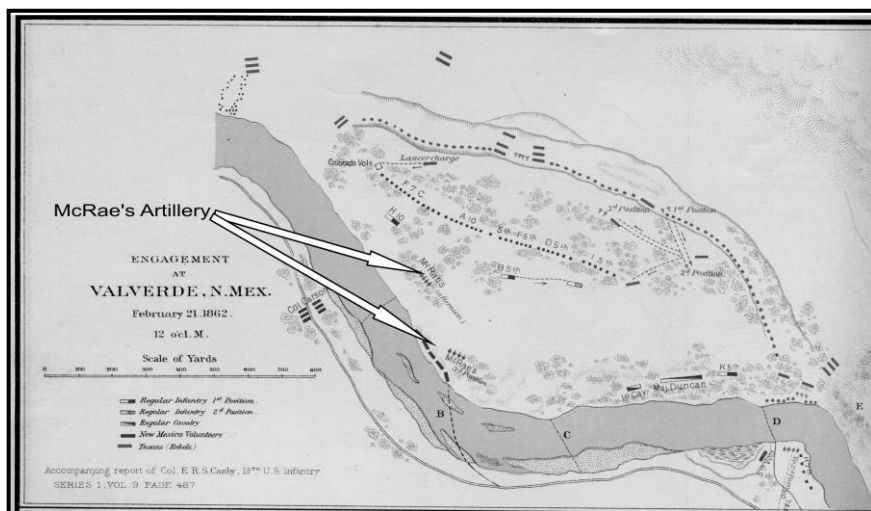
*invading army."* Gov. Henry Connally was authorized to call up the Territorial militia, which was ordered to reinforce Fort Craig.

Throughout the New Mexico territory, similar decisions of allegiance were being worked out. At Ft Union, many whose allegiance was to their homeland in the South chose to resign to join the Confederacy. One who did not do so was a young lieutenant named Alexander McRae from North Carolina, a West Point graduate that had well impressed his superior officers by his abilities and hard work. Lt McRae chose to remain with the Union and the Flag after his friends departed. Ultimately he was promoted to Captain and put in charge of first one, and then two units of field artillery based at Ft Craig.

Overall command of Union forces in the Department of New Mexico fell to Colonel Edward R. S. Canby of the Regular Army's 19th Infantry, headquartered at Ft. Marcy in Santa Fe. At the start of the Civil War, Canby was in command of Fort Defiance, New Mexico Territory. He was promoted to colonel of the 19th U.S. Infantry on May 14, 1861, and the following month commanded the Department of New Mexico. Carson's command was of four companies of the First New Mexico Volunteers, in all some 500 men. These became the third of five columns in Canby's force. When the militia forces, including Carson's men, arrived at Ft Craig, Canby had nearly 4,000 men. In fact, the fort was so crowded that many of the soldiers were forced to pitch tents outside the walls. Writing to Secretary of State William Seward in Washington from Fort Craig on February 5, 1862, Connally was optimistic: *"I have no fears of the results here. We will conquer the Texan forces. If not in the first battle, it will be done in the second or subsequent battle. We will overcome them. The spirit of our people is high...."*

At Ft Craig, Colonel Canby was aware of the Confederate movement; and, because the fort had been designed for protection from Indian raids, not full-scale onslaughts by hostile military forces, he set about reinforcing Ft Craig with new earthworks around the entire fort and added a six gun bastion outside the walls with the muzzles pointed toward the Rio Grande. Canby also employed several ruses, including the use of wooden "Quaker guns," to make the fort look stronger. Once otherwise prepared, Canby launched a cavalry attack on Sibley's leading advancing forces on February 16 that caused the Confederate forces to retreat down the Rio Grande to reform and rest.

Ultimately, General Sibley decided against a direct attack on Ft Craig. Even with his superior number of troops, he judged Fort Craig to be too strong to be taken by direct assault, so Sibley remained south of the fort and deployed his men with the goal of enticing Canby to attack. Though the Confederates remained in position for three days, Canby refused to leave his fortifications. Short on rations, Sibley convened a council of war on February 18. Following discussions it was decided to cross the Rio Grande, move up the east bank, and capture the ford at Valverde with the goal of severing Fort Craig's lines of communication to Santa Fe. Advancing, the Confederates camped to the east of the fort on the night of February 20-21. Now the Confederates could march quietly, on the early morning of February 21st, to the ford in the river, at our *Place by the River*, to cross over to the west again. It was at that point, when the Union forces saw and responded to the Confederates' advance, that the Battle of Valverde commenced.



Alerted to the Confederate movements, Canby dispatched a mixed force of cavalry, infantry, and artillery to the ford. About two miles north of the fort, near the base of the long volcanic escarpment of Black Mesa, the federals crossed the river and attacked. Slowed by their artillery, the cavalry was sent in advance to hold the ford. As Union troops were moving north, Gen Sibley ordered the ford scouted with four companies from the 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles. Arriving at the ford they were surprised to find Union troops there. Opposite the Confederate forces, Union guns under the command of Captain Mc Rae had moved into place on the west bank, while the cavalry advanced in a skirmish line. Despite possessing a numerical advantage, the Union forces did not attempt to directly assault the Confederate position. Though coming under fire from Union forces, the Confederates were unable to respond in kind as they were largely equipped with pistols and shotguns which lacked sufficient range. Learning of the standoff, Canby departed Fort Craig with the bulk of his command, only leaving a force of militia to guard the post.

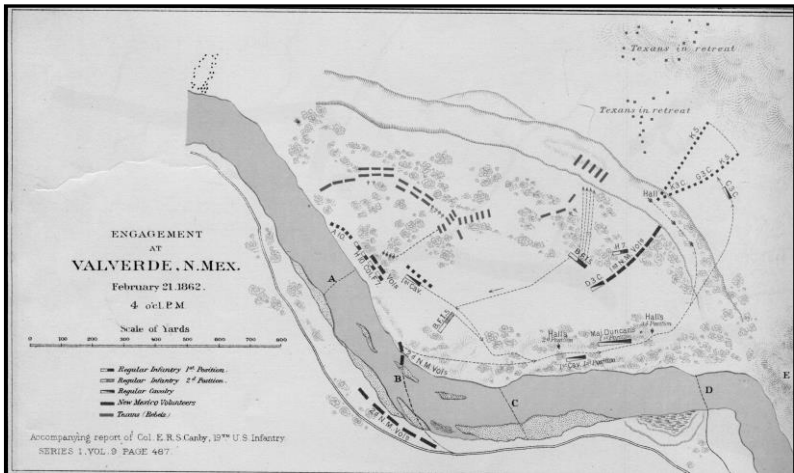
Arriving on the scene, he left McRae's two regiments of artillery on the west bank and pushed the remainder of his men across the river. Pounding the Confederate position with artillery, Union forces slowly gained the upper hand on the field. Aware of the growing fight at the ford, Sibley also sent reinforcements into the fray.

By eleven o'clock the Rebels retreated from the bosque and the east bank of the river, taking refuge behind a low ridge of sandhills that paralleled the east bank of the river. By midday the tide of battle was clearly swinging in favor of the Union Army.

At one o'clock, as additional units, both Union and Confederate, raced for Valverde, General Sibley had become so ill, exhausted, and drunk that he had retired to an ambulance in the Confederate rear and the Confederate army was turned over to Col. Thomas Green. On the Confederate's right flank, Capt. Willis L. Lang, with a company armed only with lances, launched a courageous attack against a company of Colorado Volunteers. The Coloradoans held their fire until the Lancers were within a few yards of the Federal line and then fired a deadly volley into the charging Rebels. In the suicidal attack, the Lancers suffered a greater loss of life than any other company in the battle. Captain Lang was so severely wounded that he later committed suicide.

In the midafternoon, the Confederate leaders ordered a cavalry charge against the infantry supporting McRae's artillery. They lost 29 horses before getting within 100 yards. Then a direct charge against the artillery battery was ordered that consisted of approximately a thousand men. At close range they dismounted their horses and continued the charge. It was a time of horrific death as the attacking Texans were cut down by the dozens.

Meanwhile, McRae kept his gunners at their stations firing as fast as they could. He did not fall back when the infantry around him did. Eventually, it was only McRae's men alone fighting against the oncoming Confederates as the Union forces had broken ranks in retreat. Directly in front of the enemy, directly within vision of each other, McRae is reported to have led his men, even as his junior officers and gunners were being cut down. Eventually,



only Capt Alexander McRae remained standing at his post. A Texas officer, who knew him personally, pleaded over the din of battle for McRae to put down his gun and surrender, "*Give up, McRae. We don't want to kill you*". But McRae, his right arm shattered by bullets, could still hold a pistol in the hand and, resting the hand on the muzzle of a now silenced field gun, continued firing at his enemies until he was finally silenced. So at our *Place by the River*, a hero died. As George Fitzpatrick is quoted as saying, "*His final moment of bravery was etched so vividly in the minds and hearts of friend and foe alike that for all the rest of their lives they remembered the cavalryman leaning against the field piece, defying the whole*"

Confederate army." This report of this appeared in both Confederate and Union reports.

Meanwhile, with the Union line in disarray, other Union troops fled for the Rio Grande, many dropping their weapons in their haste. A large number of the Federals were killed while attempting to cross the river. As the Union forces retreated to the safety of Fort Craig, Canby resumed a defensive position. He sent a white flag into the Rebel lines. Rebel commanders at first thought Canby was offering to surrender, but he asked only for a cessation of hostilities to remove the Federal dead and wounded. Federal dead, including Captain Alexander McRae, were interred at Fort Craig.

Sibley still lacked sufficient forces to successfully attack Fort Craig so he began his withdrawal. The Confederates also hoisted a flag of truce, buried their dead and attended to the wounded. On the day following the battle, the Rebel dead were wrapped in blankets and buried in trenches. In the Battle of Valverde, Union forces suffered a reported 263 dead, wounded and missing, while the Texans listed total casualties of 187 men. Blood flowed down the Rio Grande and was reported visible several miles below the battlefield.

Now short on rations, Sibley elected to continue north towards Albuquerque and Santa Fe with the goal of re-provisioning his army. Canby, believing he was outnumbered, elected not to pursue. Though Sibley ultimately occupied both Albuquerque and Santa Fe, he was forced to abandon New Mexico after the Battle of Glorieta Pass and the loss of his wagon train. Meanwhile, recombining the forces he had earlier divided, Canby set off in pursuit of the retreating Confederate army, but he soon gave up the chase and allowed them to reach Texas.

In assessing the Union forces failure to stop the invaders at Valverde, a Union staff officer, Capt. Gordon Chapin, in a report to Maj. Gen. H.W. Hallack, Army chief of staff in Washington, blamed the instability of the militia forces. Some had turned and swiftly fled from the battlefield in the face of the Confederate attacks.

Although many consider the battle of Valverde to have been a Confederate victory, Union forces succeeded in holding the fort and half of the Confederate's supply wagons were destroyed. The loss of the remaining supplies at the Battle of Glorieta and the Confederates retreat back to Texas ended southern aspirations for military conquest in the West.



Post-Civil War Era Artifacts found in and Around San Marcial



Canby's achievement in New Mexico had largely been in his planning an overall defensive strategy. He and his opponent, Sibley, both had limited resources. Though Canby was a little better supplied, he saw that defending the entire territory from every possible attack would stretch his forces too thinly. Realizing that Sibley had to attack along a river, especially since New Mexico was in the middle of a long drought, Canby made the best use of his forces by only defending against two possible scenarios: an attack along the Rio Grande and an attack by way of the Pecos and Canadian rivers. Moreover, the latter defensive force could easily be shifted to protect Fort Union if the enemy attacked by way of the Rio Grande, which they did. Canby also took initiative in persuading the governors of both New Mexico and Colorado to raise volunteer units to supplement regular Federal troops; the Colorado troops proved helpful at both Valverde and Glorieta.

It was Sibley's campaign to win or lose; and, in spite of occasional superior soldiering by Confederate troops and junior commanders, Sibley's sluggishness and vacillation in executing an extremely risky plan led to an almost inevitable Confederate collapse.



Confederate Monument  
along the Road into  
San Marcial

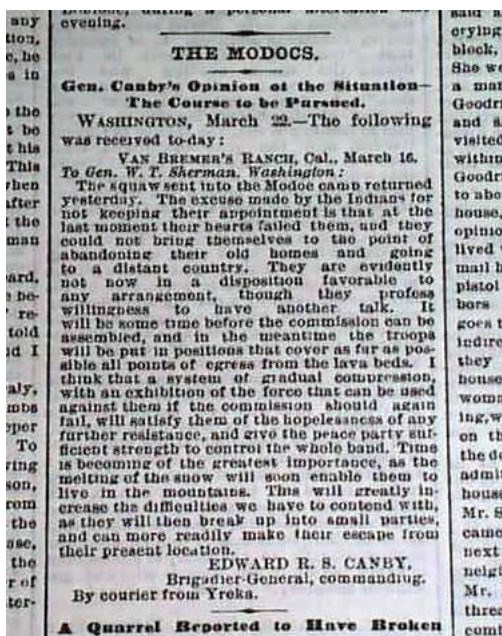
On an ironic note, General Sibley and Colonel Canby were *Brothers-in-Law* by marriage. Both had graduated from West Point and they married sisters. It is likely, however, there were no family reunions.

Five years after the battle, in 1867, the body of Captain McRae was removed from its grave at Ft Craig and given a full hero's escort from New Mexico to New York, with visits to each major military post along the way, until it arrived at West Point where he was formally interred with the full military honors of a hero. On the way, when his casket passed through Albuquerque, the procession was led by a cavalry horse "with boot in stirrup", followed by a detachment of U.S. Infantry and 300 citizens. Other stops would have been similar. As it passed through Cincinnati, the local paper observed "...*The most heroic death in the national army was his. Let his grateful countrymen and countrywomen hallow his memory, who has none of his blood to mourn his death and adore his fame.*" In his later report of the battle, then General Canby stated that McRae's memory "*deserves notice from loyalty that was deaf to the seductions of family and friends, a man who died as he lived, an example of the best and highest qualities that a man can possess.*"

## THE INDIAN WARS

After the battle at Valverde, Colonel Canby and most of the regular troops were ordered to the eastern front, but Carson and his New Mexico Volunteers were fully occupied by "Indian troubles". Brigadier General James H. Carleton, the new commander of the Federal District of New Mexico, faced one foe, Chief Mangas Coloradas of the Mimbreno Apaches, who had such a strong base in the Pinos Altos and Mogollon mountains, that the soldiers of Ft

Craig only tried to contain them but not attack them directly. Coloradas realized that he would be starved into oblivion if he didn't capture the fort and neutralize its effects. In early July 1862, barely 3 months after the Battle of Glorieta, General Carleton took almost all his men from Ft Craig south to an area of Apache uprisings, leaving only a minimum crew at Ft Craig. Coloradas' scouts found these soldiers to be mostly pre-occupied with drinking at their 4th of July party. Coloradas attacked, directly challenging the fort that the Confederates avoided. However, every sentry post was manned and the resulting firefight sent the



Newspaper Article where General Canby describes difficulties in controlling Indian tribes

Apaches back into the hills, thus ending the second battle at Fort Craig.

Later, General Carleton ordered Colonel Carson to lead an expedition against the Navajo Indians who continued to raid Pueblo Indians and European newcomers throughout the Rio Grande Valley. The Navajos should be told, Carleton instructed Carson, *"You have deceived us too often, and robbed and murdered our people too long, to trust you again at large in your own country. This war shall be pursued against you if it takes years, now that we have begun, until you cease to exist or move. There can be no other talk on the subject."* Under Carleton's direction, Carson instituted a scorched earth policy, burning Navajo fields and homes, and confiscating or killing their livestock. He was aided by other Indian tribes with long-standing enmity toward the Navajos, chiefly the Utes. Carson was pleased with the work the Utes did for him, but they went home early in the campaign when told they could not confiscate Navajo booty. Carson also had difficulty with his New Mexico volunteers. Troopers deserted and officers resigned. Carson urged Carleton to accept two resignations he was forwarding, *"as I do not wish to have any officer in my command who is not contented or willing to put up with as much inconvenience and privations for the success of the expedition as I undergo myself."* There were no pitched battles and only a few skirmishes in the Navajo campaign. Carson rounded up and took prisoner every Navajo he could find. In January 1864, Carson sent a company into Canyon de Chelly to attack the last Navajo stronghold under the leadership of Manuelito. The Navajo were forced to surrender because of the destruction of their livestock and food supplies. In the spring of 1864, 8,000 Navajo men, women and children were forced to march or ride in wagons 300 miles (480 km) to Fort Sumner, New Mexico. Navajos call this *"The Long Walk"*.

Many died along the way or during the next four years of imprisonment. In 1868, after signing a treaty with the U.S. government, remaining Navajos were allowed to return to a reduced area of their homeland, where the Navajo Reservation exists today. Thousands of other Navajo who had been living in the wilderness returned to the Navajo homeland centered around Canyon de Chelly.

Garrison duty, routine patrol and boredom again became the way of life at what cavalry Capt. John Bourke in 1869 described as "*a lonesome sort of a hole*." By 1879, the post had outlived its usefulness and was ordered abandoned. However, the troops had scarcely pulled out when the fort was reactivated to cope with an uprising of Victorio's Warm Springs Apaches. A year later, Victorio was dead, killed by Mexican troops in the mountains of Chihuahua, but Fort Craig would hang on for another five years as a supply point and troop-staging area. It was not until July 1885 that the Army pulled out for good. When the last contingent, a caretaker force of "Buffalo Soldiers" including a lieutenant and seven enlisted men, marched away, a post which had served for three decades was left to melt back into the desert from which it came. Interestingly enough, a caretaker was hired to oversee the abandoned fort properties. His name was Jack Crawford (more about him later!)

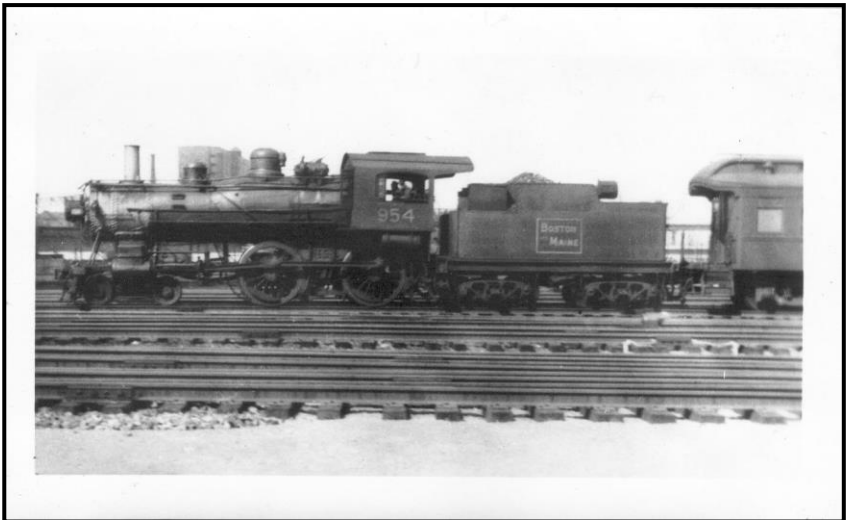
## THE FIRST CIVILIAN SETTLEMENTS

In 1854 the farm family of Pascual Joya squatted at a place on the east side of the Rio Grande River a few miles south of Fort Conrad, built an adobe shack and sold wood, hay and other commodities to the soldiers. The produce he raised sold well at Fort Conrad. Soon others joined him to found a community named *La Mesa de San Marcial* honoring the third-century Saint Martial of France. A mission church was built and served by priests from Socorro. Most important was that the fertile valley had ample water from the Rio Grande, and the fields could be irrigated by a network of *acequias*. The area grew with farmers and ranchers. Eventually, the area around Mesa del Contadero, or Black Mesa, became a complex of several villages. South of San Marcial were several small farming communities: Cantarecio, Paraje, San Albino, San Jose and Bosque Bonito. These villages were built on bends along the Rio Grande, a common practice for harnessing water for irrigation. The only problem with this method was high river water would flood the *acequias* and hence, the towns.

In 1866, the town was wiped away by a flood. Meanwhile, Fort Conrad had been relocated to the west bank of the Rio Grande a few years before; so the village also relocated to the west side, on slightly higher ground north of the Ft Craig reservation, and continued with the name San Marcial. Our *Place by the River* finally had a name – **San Marcial**. The people lost no time in re-establishing their community. With the Rio Grande and Mesa de Contadero to the east and sandy hills to the west, the narrow valley in between proved ideal for growing a variety of crops and grazing for livestock.

## ARRIVAL OF THE RAILROAD

Nothing would ever change the West more than the Railroad did. Of course, the Railroad helped the East as well, but The East existed long before the first iron rails. Towns were made up of roads that followed old Indian trails and people moved from town to town by carriage and horse drawn wagon. In the frontier, though, the Railroad would make the West in its own image. Towns would be constructed with grid-line roads that ran beside or parallel and perpendicular to the tracks. Towns would be built that were spaced such that only motorized transport could effectively support commerce and society. And, the railroads also created a whole new industry of hospitality and dining, but more on that later.



Early Manchester Engine

The story of San Marcial, in particular, is the story of the ATSF, or as it was better known, the "*Santa Fe*". The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was the brainchild of its founder, Cyrus K. Holliday, who hand-wrote its charter in 1859. From the beginning, its objective was to build a rail line from Topeka, Kansas to Santa Fe, NM and then on to the Gulf of Mexico. Ironically, The ATSF would never make it to Santa Fe. Its main line never reached there as the terrain made it too difficult to lay the necessary tracks. Santa Fe was ultimately served by a branch line from Lamy, New Mexico and a commuter line from Albuquerque.

To finance the laying of tracks and the purchase of rolling stock, the ATSF took good advantage of the sale of their land grant properties adjacent to the tracks. The Santa Fe set up real estate offices and sold farm land from the land grants across Kansas and into Colorado that the railroad was awarded by Congress; and these new farms would create a demand for transportation (both freight and passenger service) that was, quite conveniently, offered by the ATSF. The Santa Fe offered discounted passenger fares to anyone who travelled west on the railroad to inspect the land. If the land was subsequently purchased by the traveler, the railroad applied the passenger's ticket price toward the sale of the land.



The railroad broke ground in Topeka on October 30, 1868 and started building westward where one of the first construction tasks was to cross the Kaw River. The first



section of track opened on April 26, 1869 (less than a month prior to completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad) with special trains between Topeka and Pauline. The distance was only 6 miles (10 km), but the Wakarusa Creek Picnic Special train took passengers over the route for celebration in Pauline.

Crews continued working westward, reaching Dodge City on September 5, 1872. With this connection, the Santa Fe was able to compete for cattle transportation with the Kansas Pacific Railway. Construction continued, and the Santa Fe opened the last section of track between Topeka and the Colorado/Kansas border on December 23, 1873. The Santa Fe's tracks reached Pueblo, Colorado on March 1, 1876. Serving Pueblo opened a number of new freight opportunities for the railroad as it now could haul coal from Colorado eastward.

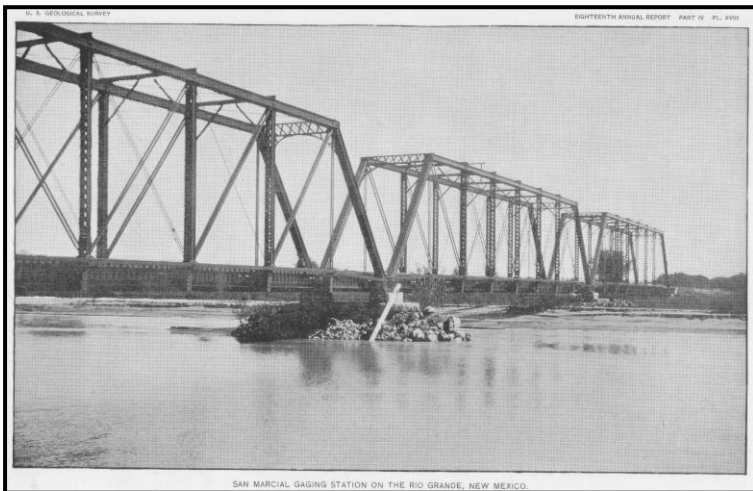
Now that the railroad had built across the plains and had a customer base providing income for the firm, it was time to turn its attention toward the difficult terrain of the Rocky Mountains. Leadville was the most productive of all of the Colorado mining regions. Mining in the area began in 1859, first for gold and then two decades later for silver. Several of the Santa Fe's board of directors (along with President Strong) sought to capitalize on the need to supply the mining towns of Colorado and northern New Mexico with food, equipment, and other supplies. To that end, Santa Fe sought to extend its route westward from Pueblo along the Arkansas River, and through the Royal Gorge in 1877.

Royal Gorge was a bottleneck along the Arkansas too narrow for both the Santa Fe and the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad to pass through, and there was no other reasonable access to the South Park area; thus, a

race ensued to build rail access through the Gorge. Physical confrontations led to two years of armed conflict, essentially low-level guerrilla warfare between the two companies that came to be known as the *Royal Gorge Railroad War*. Federal intervention prompted an out-of-court settlement on February 2, 1880 in the form of the so-called "*Treaty of Boston*" wherein the D&RG was allowed to complete its line and lease it for use by the Santa Fe. However, the D&RG was a narrow gauge railroad and the AT&SF was not, so once the tracks were laid for the AT&SF, the D&RG could not use them.

The D&RG paid an estimated \$1.4 million to Santa Fe for its work within the Gorge and agreed not to extend its line to Santa Fe, while the AT&SF agreed to forgo its planned routes to Denver and Leadville.

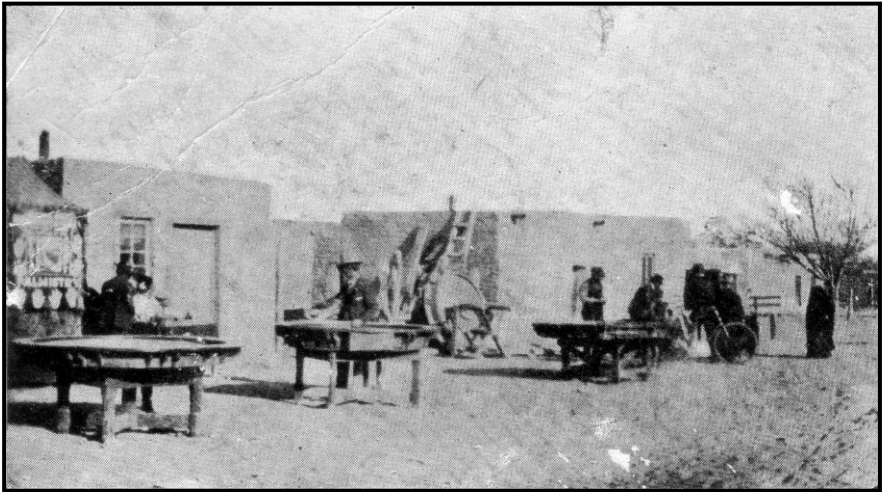
Also looking to the south, an initial outlay of \$20,000 was authorized on February 26, 1878 for the construction of a rail line south from Trinidad in order to "*..seize and hold Raton Pass.*" The location of the route was nearly as crucial to the venture's success as was the actual track



Railroad Bridge South of San Marcial

construction. W. R. "Ray" Morley, a former civil engineer for the D&RG, hired by the AT&SF in 1877, was given his first assignment to secretly plot a route through the pass. *(It was feared that any activity in the area would lead the D&RG to construct a narrow gauge line over the Pass).* Additionally, Strong learned that the Southern Pacific Railroad (SP) had introduced legislation to block the Santa Fe's entry into New Mexico. Undaunted, Strong obtained a charter for the New Mexico and Southern Pacific Railroad Company and immediately sent A. A. Robinson to Raton Pass. Through his political skills, Strong was able to deflect the Southern Pacific legislation and the AT&SF was clear to proceed.

From February to December of 1878 work crews struggled to build the line between La Junta and Raton, and the first Santa Fe train entered New Mexico on December 7. Now New Mexico was physically linked by iron rails to the commerce and ideals of the American nation. Its Hispanic roots would be forever changed.



Old Town San Marcial Village

After passing quickly through the terrain south of Raton Pass, the railroad reached Los Vegas, Albuquerque, and Belen. In 1880, it reached *Our Place by the River*, near the village of San Marcial, a not inconsequential village of 111 dwellings and stores.



Some of the Railroad Man's Tools of the Trade

## A TOWN IS BORN

However, the railroad selected a place for its tracks and facilities not in the old San Marcial village, but somewhat north and closer to the river; adjacent to the old river ford that was so dearly fought for during the



San Marcial c1885

Battle of Valverde. The AT&SF quickly built a freight depot, telegraph building and roundhouse capable of handling eight engines. In 1881 the railroad built a series of cottages for their employees and planted avenues of cottonwood trees that were added to by the residents. One of the area ranchers, Pablo Gomez, donated land in "New" San Marcial for a church. It was eagerly built by the area families, and was designated a mission church to Socorro in 1880. By 1887, the growing church was redesignated to a parish, and received its own priest, to serve San Marcial and the surrounding communities. This new community became known as "New San Marcial" but still consisted mostly of temporary wooden buildings because the



The Armstrong Brothers, Saloon Keepers

ownership of the land was in dispute and none of the new residents could get a clear title to any property they might buy. No sooner had the new town began to grow than, in July of 1881, it was nearly totally destroyed by fire. However, the town was rebuilt and grew to a community of a thousand residents and became the local center for agricultural and irrigation projects.

Also in 1880, an overland stage coach route from Silver City to the railhead of the railroad at San Marcial was instituted. The new town was becoming a hub of sorts for the local area. This growth was further accelerated in the 1890s when the railroad moved their main yards from flood-prone Socorro to San Marcial. Many workers relocated to build the maintenance shops, offices and the roundhouse to service the AT&SF line. Local people were hired as well. This was a major boom to the growth of the area, which by now had actually developed into three



towns less than a mile apart: old San Marcial (La Plaza Vieja), San Geronimo, and New Town San Marcial. The population soon exceeded 2,000 people. New San Marcial retained the name "San Marcial" for its post office, while old San Marcial chose a post office name of "Milligan". By the 1920's, San Marcial would become the second largest community in Socorro County.

Big Dan Walker, Cowboy  
turned RR Man



**This is a Type 2 Postal Cancellation from San Marcial.**

*“Quite scarce variety of completely inverted date “SEP 21 82” inside the cds. The arrival of the railroad in the early 1880’s launched a brief boom for San Marcial. Toden illustrates the Type 2 date as sideways. Possibly an error in the retention of the Type 2 canceller even though a new Type 3 was already in use. **Perhaps Type 2 (this cancellation) was used as a canceller for the older Hispanic San Marcial village, while the new Type 3 was used in the newer Railroad town then springing up.** Recorded period of usage for Type 2 is June 1881 to January 1883.”*

The Albuquerque Daily Journal in its October 25, 1880, issue reported that Moore, Bennett and Co. was firmly established in a huge tent, and business was brisk. The grocery stores of Swiggle and Spear were both enjoying good sales and the branch lumber yard of Simpson and Co., from Socorro, was meeting with the success this enterprise deserved. Town lots were selling for \$75 to \$125 each, and the *material improvements* section reported that two new residences had been built on "Quality Flat", wherever that may have been. At first the new arrivals, afraid the titles would be in jeopardy, were reluctant to purchase property. Martin Zimmerman, who had purchased Wilson Waddingham's interests, formed the San Marcial Land and Improvement Company to protect the buyers of real estate. To ensure the success of his business and the future of the town, he donated lots for a school and two churches. It was not until August 28, 1882, however, that a plat of the "New Town of San Marcial" was filed with the office of the Probate Clerk of Socorro County. The heirs and successors of Smith and



San Marcial Railroad Family Housing



Biggs agreed to give clear title to the 4,000 acres they controlled, and the sale of real estate shot skyward.

As mentioned earlier, in July 1881, the first of many fires devastated the town and it narrowly missed being wiped out completely. That fall Fred M. Spear cast a deciding vote for the future when he erected a large general store, and this is generally considered to be the commencement of the new town of San Marcial. The Lone Star, an El Paso newspaper, under dateline of November 25, 1882, declared "*Over 200 railroad men are now employed at San Marcial.*" The town was alive and growing, and new businesses were being established. By the end of that year the small town was able to boast that it had, in addition to Spear's store, a butcher shop, restaurant, barber shop, a Chinese laundry, two saloons, and one hotel.

Along about this point in time (1882) the railroad built a series of small cottages for their employees, and as rapidly as the tenements were completed a family was on hand to move in. Throughout their lifetime these buildings were referred to as "company houses." There was no mistaking which company was meant as each structure was uniformly decorated with the traditional "Santa Fe Red" paint, a shade that had long been standard for their box cars. Certainly the correlation in appearance was often a topic of light conversation among the housewives. Years later the color was changed to a golden yellow, and the tenants were delighted. These homes were two stories in height; and, in the early 1930's after the town was abandoned, the upper floors were salvaged and relocated to Tiffany for use by the section crews stationed there. Living in San Marcial was fairly comfortable and inexpensive. The company housing rented for between four and ten dollars a month. Of course the quarters were

not modern by present day standards, but a few households could boast that they had a sink and faucet in the kitchen. This convenience accounted in part, no doubt, for the higher rent payment. The remainder of the occupants looked to a spigot in the yard for their water supply. Coal and wood ranges served both cooking and heating needs. The backyard was a usual location for the privies, which could be counted on to be filled with seepage from the nearby river, and water snakes were not infrequent sights. It took a considerable time for some of the newcomers to become accustomed to the “crawlies” as they were usually called. Bathing was a real experience. The men could bath at the barber shop...the ladies frequented the Harvey House...and the kids were scrubbed down in laundry tubs – in the backyard during the warm summer months and next to the kitchen range in the winter.



In the early years, between 1880 and 1900, the town was quite beautiful with an abundance of spreading trees, green grass and decorative shrubbery. Flowers grew with a minimum of care. But when the perennial floods began in 1904 and continued year after year, the tall, stately trees began to wither and die. As it turned out, this was an omen of things to come, and none of them were good. Most of the local residents placed the blame for the recurring disaster on the Bureau of Reclamation for their development of the Elephant Butte Reservoir. The river



San Marcial Railroad Ave Showing Cottonwood Trees

slowed down and commenced to silt up. In order to protect their roadbed and other investments, the AT&SF erected a dike paralleling the flow of the stream. Keeping a cautious eye on the ever-rising water, the company continuously raised the embankment each year until eventually the river-bed was ten feet higher than the town site; and people became progressively more nervous.

San Marcial's main street was Railroad Avenue – a dusty, unpaved road that separated the Santa Fe interest along the river from the town site. On the west side of the road the town's business district extended for approximately two blocks, and a row of cottonwood trees outlined the railroad's property on the opposite side. At the far south end, facing the company housing, stood *Hanna's Mercantile Company*. The north end of that first block was anchored by the *San Marcial Drug Company*, founded and operated by Dr. A. A. Shaw, a Past Master of Hiram Lodge. Sandwiched in between was the usual assortment of small establishments that contribute to the personality of all communities – smoke shop, dry goods, stationery and gifts, bakery, telephone office, newspaper, and the post office. Across the principal intersection was the *Bank of San Marcial*: President, Frank Johnson, Cashier, Wilburn J. Joyce, both Past Masters of the Lodge, and the former Grand Master of Masons in New Mexico, 1910-11. What sort of place was San Marcial? It was a small town – population figures vary from 600 clear up to 4,000, depending upon one's source of information, but it is more likely that the town likely exceeded 1,500 people at its peak. The usual things happened during the early days: Dave Rudabaugh and his gang terrorized the village for a short time before moving on; fancy Paddy Ryan, who had escaped from jail in Juarez, paid a quick visit and before he departed had shot and killed the City Marshall; occasional armed robberies were unwanted diversions for

the local shopkeepers; and the Apaches, who had not yet been confined to reservations, appeared on the scene periodically to remind the populace that the Wild West was still more fact than fancy. Located at an elevation of 4,000 feet, the climate made the area a natural sanitarium for



San Marcial School 1896

consumptives; but this did not prevent several of the residents from dying of "lead poisoning" brought on by the overzealousness of a ranch hand turned loose for the weekend. It was a lively place, situated in a beautiful valley, and cow punchers from the nearby Diamond A, railroaders, miners, ranchers, homesteaders, gamblers, and an occasional wanderer, made the little village rock on Saturday nights and holidays. Until prohibition dried them up there were several "watering holes" that enjoyed a good following and provided the cast for much of the town's spontaneous entertainment. The villagers also enjoyed less violent festivities at the local Opera House, "*one of the finest in the Territory*", cheered their baseball teams to victory, vocally unleashed their pent-up feelings at an impromptu rodeo at the spacious Ball Park provided by the railroad, or cavorted to their heart's content at Robert Mitchell's combination Skating Rink/Dance Pavilion. For the intellectual there was a Reading Room at the Harvey House, presided over by Marshall Van Courveden. A common pastime of many, that didn't require much effort, was to lounge in the shade of the brick-faced platform at the depot and watch the trains come in. At one time there were as many as four passenger trains daily on the run between Albuquerque and El Paso. Today the only traffic that stirs memories of the past is an occasional string of freight cars – no longer dressed out in "*Santa Fe Red*" but resplendent with all shades of the rainbow represented. First J.N. Broyles private bank and later the Bank of San Marcial offered a convenient and safe place for the residents to invest their surplus savings; and local and international news was brought into their homes once a week by a succession of newspapers known variously as the San Marcial Times, Reporter, Bee and finally the Standard. When telephones were introduced in 1906 the "new fangled" invention proved to be a more rapid means of spreading the word through the town, either directly or

via the “*party line*.” For more distant, and certainly more personal communications, they continued to rely on the postal service. Mail was sorted and cased twice a day, and everyone found an opportunity to check their mail at the same time to exchange small talk with their neighbors and friends. And would you believe that when the Post Office was moved from nearby Fort Craig to San Marcial that the man entrusted to its care was Sam Hanna, the owner of the large General Store. Somehow or other his added chore was squeezed in between sacking groceries and pumping gas. Later S. Gray Hanna would inherit the position of Postmaster, a job which he held until September 1930, when it was abolished.



Public School Class in 1905





San Marcial Flour Mill

A modern flour mill was constructed for the convenience of the large number of farmers in the rich Rio Grande Valley, and a Light Plant, established in late 1905, provided electricity for both residential and street illumination. The town was blessed with several physicians, who conducted their practice out of their own pharmacies or drug stores, a typical custom of the times. For those with cavities, abscesses or loose dentures, their fate was to tough it out until the dentist came down from Socorro. This occurred one day a month and office space was provided at the Harvey House. Religious needs were fulfilled by either the Roman Catholic Church or one of the two Protestant (Methodist and Episcopal) denominations. These were staffed by itinerate circuit riders from either Socorro or Las Cruces on a somewhat erratic schedule. There was a public-school serving grades one through eight as early as 1888. In 1902, becoming unhappy with the level of academic instruction provided by the county Board of



Education, J.N. Broyles organized the Holiness Mission and Bible School. There were three buildings in the school complex, which included an orphanage, and it was governed by a local board and supported by donations. Attendance ranged from 80 to 120 students, and all races, creeds and ages were welcomed. The school burned in 1907 and was never rebuilt.

Fire was the scourge of the town on many occasions: the Opera House had burned prior to 1900 and had to be rebuilt from the ground up, the Freight and Passenger Depot was reduced to ashes in 1902, various portions of the business community burned in 1881 and 1893, and scattered buildings succumbed often to flames in the years following. To add to the local excitement, shortly after the turn of the century a series of minor earthquakes rocked the mid Rio Grande Valley, but the tremors and shock waves caused only a minimum of damage. As serious as these disasters were, San Marcial always managed to bounce back and appeared to become stronger than before. Its residents were determined that their town would not be listed among those in the Estancia Valley that had “died of fear.” There were, however, additional natural calamities that would be unleashed against them in the years ahead.

The new community lay to the west of the railroad complex and, as previously mentioned, was physically separated from it by main street – Railroad Avenue – a wide, dusty unpaved carriage road. Most of the town’s business establishments were located along the west side of the street facing the depot and the familiar Harvey House (aka San Marcial House), compressed into the two short blocks between Floyd and Zimmerman Avenues. On the opposite side of Railroad Avenue was a double row of ragged

cottonwood trees outlining the banks of the Acequia Madre that ran along the western edge of the railroad property..



The AT&SF Depot – San Marcial

The Santa Fe line from Albuquerque to Deming, NM and El Paso, TX was named the Rio Grande Division. Locally, the line was called the *Horny Toad*, after a plentiful local reptile of the same name. According to Lenore Dils, who wrote about the area in her book Horny Toad Man, railroaders preferred that name for their district rather than refer to the river that caused them so much headache.



The **Toad** followed the Rio Grande for most of its journey to El Paso, except for a piece where the railroad ran east

of the Fra Cristobal Range and the river ran west of it. At the south end of that section was the junction town of Rincon. At the north end was the headquarters of the Rio Grande Division, our San Marcial. Santa Fe's division headquarters facilities included a large 2-story depot and division office building with a two-story bay window and hip roof, somewhat atypical of Santa Fe depot architecture of the time. Next door to the south was the Fred Harvey lunch and dining room and hotel (San Marcial House), an oasis of civilization and good food in the wilderness. A 24x48 vertical steel water tank was located nearby, and further to the south, a 15 stall limestone roundhouse and a "Clifton" style coal chute - a big wooden affair that looked like a tunnel. Loaded coal wagons were pulled or shoved up an elevated ramp into the tunnel, and laborers shoveled the coal into pockets in the sides of the chute, which could then be emptied into the tenders of locomotives drawn up along either side of the chute.



San Marcial Roundhouse



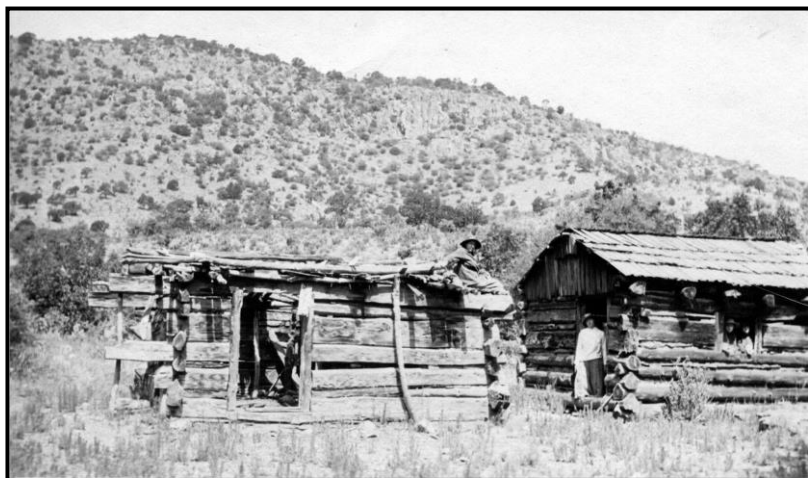
Machine Shop Inside the Roundhouse



Nothing in the Day Rivalled the Power of the Steam Locomotive



Chloride Mining in the Hills near San Marcial



Cabins West of Town



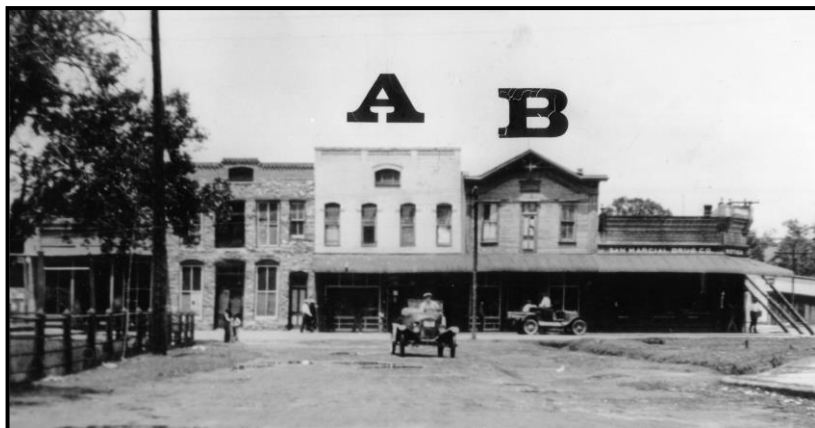


Railroad Men in Harvey House Front Yard

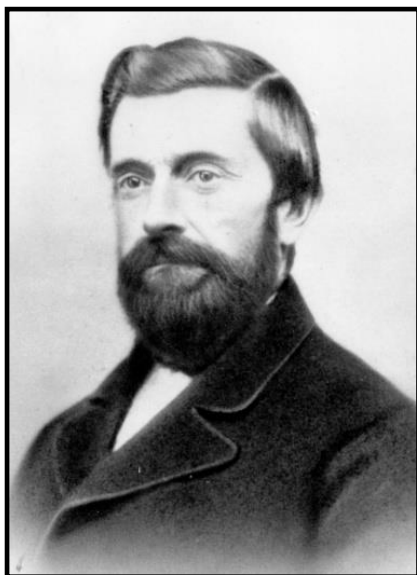


Dr Shaw, Owner of San  
Marcial Drug and Past  
Master of the Masonic  
Lodge, and his Family

## MASONRY AND OTHER FRATERNAL ORDERS IN SAN MARCIAL



Masonic Lodge Building (Up Stairs) 1885-1923 [A] and 1923-1929 [B]



William H. Baker

On December 23, 1884, William H Baker, a Civil Engineer employed by the Santa Fe and a member of Chapman Masonic Lodge No. 2 Las Vegas, New Mexico, wrote to R.W. Brother Alpheus A. Keen, Grand Secretary and a fellow member of Chapman Lodge, requesting "Whatever forms would be necessary for organizing a new lodge". On the evening of the same day at a Regular

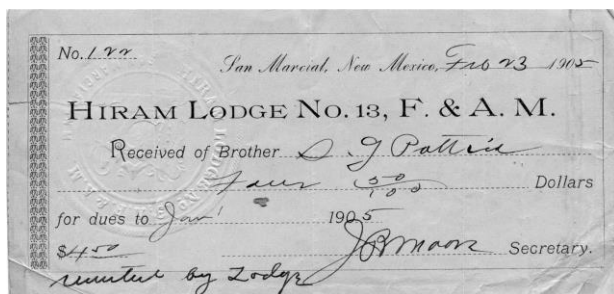
Communication of Socorro Lodge No. 9, three of their members asked for and received demits "for the purpose of becoming charter members in a new lodge to be formed at San Marcial".

M.W. Brother Cornelius Bennett issued a dispensation on March 18, 1885 and at once proceeded to San Marcial to organize the Lodge and set it to work. The initial entry in the bound minute books preserved in the archives of the Lodge is dated March 20, 1885, and contains a descriptive account of the proceedings of the first meeting of Hiram Lodge U.D (Under Development). The Grand Master was to later include in his Address to the Grand Lodge a short report:

*"The San Marcial brethren deserve great credit for the fine and secure hall they had prepared, the regalia and paraphernalia, and above all, for the skill they exhibited in the work. I predict for this lodge a brilliant future."*

In the months following organization, considerable activity was taking place both in and out of the lodge room. The Annual

Return for Hiram Lodge U.D. showed that the membership had increased from the original 11 charter members to a total of 24.



On Wednesday evening, November 11, 1885, in one of his first official acts, M.W. Brother Maximillian Eugene Frost,



new Grand Master of Masons in the Territory of New Mexico, signed the charter of Hiram Lodge No. 13. A victory banquet was held at the Harvey House in San Marcial on Saturday, November 28, 1885, followed by a Special Communication of the Grand Lodge, presided over by Grand Master Frost; and the new Lodge was "Consecrated, Instituted, and Installed in Ample Form."

The possibilities for increasing membership in the small Town of San Marcial were initially quite limited. Added to the lack of a steady influx of new residents was the competition offered by other fraternal orders, such as the Knights of Pythias, Ancient Order of United Workmen, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and the United Court of Honor. It is to Hiram's credit that it survived under such conditions; and, when the end of the town's existence drew near, it had the distinction of being the only fraternal lodge still in San Marcial on active status.

Part of the success enjoyed in San Marcial by Hiram Lodge can be attributed to its pleasant quarters. The District Deputy Grand Master for the 6<sup>th</sup> Masonic District, in his report to the Grand Lodge in 1902, wrote that "Hiram Lodge No. 13 has one of the prettiest and most tastefully furnished little lodge rooms to be

Brotherhood of RR Trainmen was one of several organizations that met in the Masonic Hall

1911 1912 1913 1914 1915 1916 1917 1918

*Separate receipt must be issued for each month and the year end month for which dues are paid must be indicated on opposite receipt work.*

**BROTHERHOOD OF RAILROAD TRAINMEN**

No. 33 San Marcial NM Sept 1<sup>st</sup> 1915 Lodge No.

RECEIVED FROM Bro. J. H. Hyde

DUES MONTH OF Sept	\$ 1.25	LEGISLATIVE ASST. NO.	\$
GRAND DUES MONTH OF		PROTECTIVE FUND MONTH OF Sept	\$ 2.5
SPECIAL ASSESSMENT NO.	\$	FUNERAL BENEFIT FUND MONTH OF	\$
GEN'L GRIEVANCE COM ASST NO.	\$	ADMISSION FEE	\$
TOTAL		\$ 15.0	

TREASURER: W. E. Blakemore

*(Signatures of Treasurer or Collector must be personally written in ink.)*

*This receipt should not bear seal of subordinate lodge unless subscriber secret work on back is filled out.*

---

TO BE FILLED OUT ONLY WHEN THE HOLDER REQUESTS INSTRUCTION IN SECRET WORK FROM A LODGE OTHER THAN THE ONE TO WHICH HE BELONGS.

**ORDER FOR SECRET WORK**

I, THE BEARER HEREOF, BROTHER Fred E. Hyde, IS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING OF THIS LODGE AND IS ENTITLED TO THE SECRET WORK AND PASSPORT UNTIL THE EXPIRATION OF THIS RECEIPT. THE PRESIDENT PAST PRESIDENT VICE PRESIDENT OR TREASURER OF ANY LODGE TO WHOM THIS IS PRESENTED IS AUTHORIZED TO INSTRUCT HIM IN THE SAME. WHEN SATISFIED HE IS THE PERSON TO WHOM THIS RECEIPT WAS ISSUED.

San Marcial NM 11/8 1914

J. E. Hyde PRESIDENT

J. E. Hyde SECRETARY

NOT GOOD UNLESS RECEIPT ON OPPOSITE SIDE IS PROPERLY FILLED OUT.

IMPRESS LODGE SEAL HERE

GENERAL SECRETARY & TREASURER

REMARKS TO FILE IN BACK OF RECEIPT

Fred E. Hyde

*found anywhere.*" This, plus the fact that it was one of the few comfortable lodge rooms in town, brought numerous requests to sublet their hall to other bodies. The brethren of Hiram Lodge had obtained the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of a new building, over a restaurant, for their first home. The ground floor tenant was to successively be a meat market, saloon, billiard hall, and finally a general store, but the Lodge was to remain for 38 years. A letter written by the first Master stated that the hall was "being fitted up solely for use as a Masonic Hall", that the Lodge Room measured 21 feet by 46 feet, had a preparation room, and an ante room for the Tyler. The rent was \$24/month or \$288/year, and the small membership couldn't possibly have met the payments and funded their other expenditures out of their \$6.00 (later lowered to \$4.50) dues. Soon, though, the landlord petitioned to join the lodge and probably after some persuasion the rent was reduced to a more realistic figure.

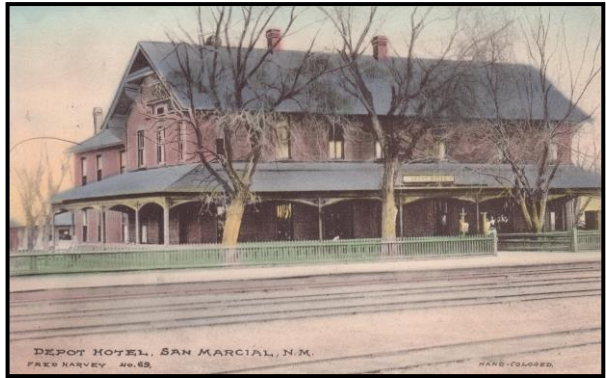
During the years in San Marcial the Lodge Hall also served as the meeting place for many of the railroad's labor groups: the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Order of Railway Conductors, Brotherhood of Railroad Brakemen, and the Order of Railway Trainmen. The modest rental fees paid by these organizations not only helped immensely with the fixed overhead, but permitted the Lodge to fulfill a large share of their charitable obligations to the community. It is no secret that the Lodge has always been public spirited. For a number of years Hiram Lodge led the way in seeing that the local school building remained in good repair, and on one occasion they spearheaded a drive for donations of funds, materials and volunteer labor to add a new room to the little red school house at the corner of Third Street and San Marcial Avenue. Although the first Public School Law in New Mexico was not penned until 1891, a school was operated

in San Marcial as early as 1888 with Henry D. Overton as the teacher. They also maintained the only [non-catholic] cemetery within a radius of 30 miles of the town, continually keeping the fence painted and the grounds in a presentable condition. Hiram Lodge was extremely proud of the fact that a great many of its active members were also prominent among the congregations of the Episcopal and Methodist churches in San Marcial.

The records do not include specifically where the money came from to finance and furnish the new Lodge; but, in analyzing several entries listing payments on a note held by Mr. Hamilton Glass, it can be assumed that this gentleman loaned the Lodge approximately \$500.00 when it appeared a dispensation would be granted. The identity of Mr. Glass has never been learned. Since there were also no banks in San Marcial in the 1880's, it is thought that Mr. Glass was a local merchant and in loaning money, was following a custom prevalent during that period. How it was accomplished is unknown, but the loan was paid in full several months before the Charter was granted.

## FRED HARVEY AND THE SAN MARCIAL (HARVEY) HOUSE

San Marcial, in its time, boasted many notable businesses and people. But the top of the list would undoubtedly be the *San Marcial*



San Marcial (Harvey) House

*House*, (aka the

Harvey House), located next to the train station. It was an outpost of one of the most successful business ventures in the American west. To understand the significance of the San Marcial Harvey House, a little background on the Fred Harvey "empire" is necessary.



San Marcial House Front Counter

Frederick Henry Harvey was an entrepreneur who developed the Harvey House lunch rooms, restaurants, souvenir shops, and hotels, which served rail passengers on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, the Gulf Coast and Santa Fe Railway, the Kansas Pacific Railway, the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway, and the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis. Born in London on June 27, 1835, Fred Harvey immigrated to the United States in 1850. Initially, he found jobs in restaurants in New York and later in New Orleans. In 1855 he moved to St. Louis where he married Barbara Sarah Mattas. He and a partner opened a restaurant which later folded during the Civil War. Fred and Barbara moved to St. Joseph, Missouri where he worked for the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad. In 1865 they moved to Leavenworth, Kansas. Traveling in performance of his work, he recognized the deplorable lack of decent meals and lodging for railroad travelers. In 1870, no good lodging or food could be reliably found west of St. Louis. Railroads in those days gave little thought to passengers' needs. Train stops were seldom more than 10 minutes at a time and allowed no time to obtain local food (no fast food in those days). Fred Harvey began providing supplies for the United States Army in the west. In 1876 he persuaded the manager of the new Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railroad that he could provide quality food in pleasant restaurants inside railroad stations. The first Harvey House Restaurant opened in the Topeka Santa Fe Depot Station in 1876. It was an immediate success, which led to other Harvey House Restaurants, and later Harvey House Hotels along the Santa Fe route. He opened Fred Harvey houses every 100 miles in Kansas, Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico during the 1880's and 1890's. Harvey got freight service free from the AT&SF; so, with refrigerated cars, food selection and quality were no longer limited by geography.



San Marcial Harvey Girls on Front Lawn

Left to Right:

*Lois DeSpave, Louise Nichols, Della Schmiedt, May (Cody) Crawford, Jewel Price, Grace O'Keefe, Rose Schmiedt, Lina Hockett, Susan Scott, Gertrude Mosseman, Tillie Kauter*

When dining cars were added, "*Meals by Fred Harvey*" were featured on the Santa Fe railroad. Candy vendors on the trains had the quality of their candy and reading materials upgraded by Fred Harvey to the extent that sales rose by 60 times after Harvey took over control of this business.

Mr. Harvey insisted on "*Maintenance of standards, regardless of cost*". This meant that the food must be first rate, served promptly, in fashionable surroundings, at a reasonable cost. Harvey Girls were recruited from good homes, primarily in the east, and brought culture, refinement and romance to a still very wild West. Typical age for Harvey girls was 18 to 30 years old, and each was thoroughly trained to become an efficient, poised

waitress. Most signed two-year contracts, but only a few fulfilled them. Fred Harvey and his management were very willing to part with any lady who had found her match and decided to settle down in the West. And it should not be considered surprising that some of the most popular boy's names in the era were "Fred", "Frederick" and "Harvey".

When he died in 1901, there were 47 Harvey House restaurants, 15 hotels (including the San Marcial House), and 30 dining cars on the AT&SF Railroad. His last words to his sons were reportedly "Don't cut the ham too thin, boys." A Fred Harvey museum is located in the former Harvey residence in Leavenworth, Kansas. another is located in Belen, NM.

Harvey was obsessed about quality. He hired a chef from Chicago for his first hotel (in Florence Kansas, 1877) at \$5000/yr (highest paid person in Florence) , and imported linens, silver and china from Europe. Throughout the expansion of his business, he maintained this same level of quality with no compromises.

He was also meticulous about organization. On the AT&SF, trainmen would canvass passengers before arriving at a meal stop, tallying the numbers who wanted lunch counter and who wanted dining room service. The totals would be telegraphed ahead from one or two stations before the stop; and, just outside the stop, the engineer would blow a long whistle to announce its arrival. Meal stops were typically 25 - 30 minutes to allow time for guests (and crews) to dine. In San Marcial, for example, the northbound train from El Paso would arrive at 12:50 PM. The lunch counter and dining room would have places set up and ready for the planned number of guests. As soon as the train stopped in front of the



San Marcial House Lunch Counter

terminal, a porter would direct the Harvey customers next door to the restaurant. Once they entered the restaurant, a hostess would greet them, escort them to their seat, take their drink order (coffee, hot tea, iced tea, or milk), and then put their cups in a "coded" position on the table so that the drinks girl knew what to pour without having to ask. (This "coding" is still used today to a least a limited extent in many restaurants).

In the dining room, customers would receive up to seven entrees for a price of 75 cents (raised to \$1 in 1918). Male diners were required to wear a coat; and, if someone didn't have one, he would be loaned an alpaca coat for the duration of the meal. Lunch counter meals were less expensive but quality was just as high, but less variety was available. They also did not require a coat. At 15 minutes before train departure, an attendant would always announce there was no reason to hurry; then time was called again at 10 minutes. The Conductor waited for



word from the house manager that all customers were done and departed before allowing the train to depart.

In San Marcial, as soon as the northbound train departed at 1:15P, the southbound train was arriving from Albuquerque and the Harvey House staff was scrambling

Read down Albuquerque and El Paso Read up						W
15 Daily	21-65- 5-13 Daily	Miles	Table 15	14 Daily	16-8- 22 Daily	Rea
AM	PM			AM	PM	51- Ex. S
	11.00	0.0	Lv... Chicago (C.T.)... Ar	6.55	8.30	PM
	10.50	451.1	" Kansas City (C.T.) "	4.45	8.05	12.
	7.00	1338.7	Ar Albuquerque (M. T.) Lv	7.45	3.35	f 12.
	10.00	11.30	Lv. Albuquerque 9. 10 Ar	6.55	4.30	12.
	f 10.12	1346.1	" Barr. "		f 4.17	12.
	10.20	1351.3	" Isleta. "	6.35	4.10	12.
	10.35	1358.7	" Los Lunas. "	6.20	3.55	12.
	f 10.45	1363.7	" Chloe. "		f 3.45	f 1.
1240	10.55	1368.9	Ar... Belen 10. 33... Lv	6.00	3.35	1.
1230	11.00	1368.9	Lv... Belen. Ar	5.45	3.15	2.
	f 11.07	1372.9	" Jarales. "		f 3.08	2.
	f 11.17	f 12.51	" Sabinal. "	f 5.27	f 2.59	PM
	f 11.27	1380.6	" Bernardo. "		f 2.49	
	11.38	f 1.08	" La Joya. "	f 5.10	2.40	
	f 11.58	1401.2	" San Acacia. "	f 4.50	f 2.22	
	f 12.10	f 1.38	" Limitar. "	f 4.41	f 2.11	
	12.27	1.53	Ar... Socorro 17. Lv	4.25	1.57	
	12.46	2.12	Lv... San Antonio. Ar	4.13	1.42	
	f 12.58	1431.5	" Elmendorf. "	f 4.01	f 1.30	Rea
	1.15	2.40	Ar... San Marcial. Lv	3.45	1.15	43
	1.40	2.50	Lv... San Marcial. Ar	3.30	12.50	Ex.
	f 1.55	1448.6	" Pope. "		f 12.35	Sun
	f 2.08	f 3.28	" Lava. "	f 2.52	f 12.20	AM
1005	f 2.23	1467.7	" Crocker. "		f 12.05	7.4
See	2.38	4.04	" Engle. "	2.14	11.50	8.3
Vote	f 2.49	f 4.17	" Cutter. "	f 2.02	f 11.38	9.0
10.00	f 2.56	1492.7	" Aleman. "		f 11.30	AM
	f 3.05	f 4.37	" Upham. "	f 1.42	f 11.21	
	f 3.20	f 4.54	" Grama. "	f 1.22	f 11.05	
	3.30	5.05	Ar... Rincon 22. Lv	1.05	10.50	
	3.30	5.20	Lv... Rincon. Ar	12.45	10.50	
our	f 3.40	f 5.32	Lv... Heathden. Ar		f 10.40	N
se	f 3.42	f 5.34	Ar... Tonuco. Lv	f 12.24	f 10.38	Rea
ay	f 3.56	f 5.47	" Medler. "		f 10.23	45
ps	f 3.58	f 5.51	" Fort Selden. "	f 12.01	f 10.21	Ex. S
ie	f 4.05	f 6.00	" Leasburg. "	f 11.53	f 10.15	AM
co	f 4.08	f 6.04	" Hill. "	f 11.50	f 10.12	11.
	4.14	6.12	" Dona Ana. "	11.43	10.05	f 11.
	4.24	6.25	" Las Cruces. "	11.32	9.56	11.
	4.30	6.33	" Mesilla Park. "	11.27	9.50	AM
i	f 4.45	f 6.50	" Mesquite. "	f 11.12	9.36	
	f 4.52	f 6.57	" Verde. "	f 11.05	9.30	

1929 Albuquerque to El Paso Schedule

to clean up and reset the dining room for the next group of customers.

A "typical" 75 cent lunch would include:

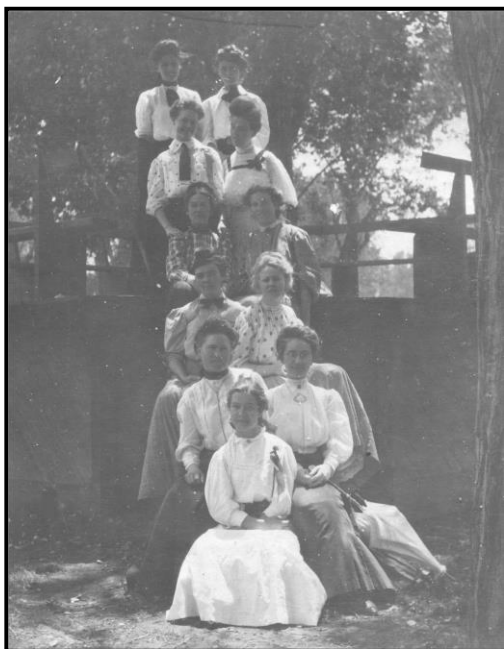
*Blue points on shell, English peas au gratin, filet of whitefish with madeira sauce, potatoes francaise, young capon with hollandaise sauce, roast sirloin of beef au jus, pork with applesauce, stuffed turkey with cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, Elgin sugar corn, marrowfat peas, asparagus in cream sauce, salami of duck, queen olives, baked veal pie, charlotte of peaches with cognac sauce, prairie chicken with currant jelly, sugar cured ham, pickled lambs tongue, lobster salad, beets, celery and french slaw. Then desserts.....! Diners could pick any or all of the dishes, but few took more than a few.*

Menus were coordinated among Harvey Houses along a route to avoid duplication of entrees for the long-distance travelers. Drinks were important. Harvey established his own dairy herd in Arizona to serve milk there. Coffee at each Harvey House was specially formulated to work with the local water that had been chemically analyzed.

Harvey is also known for pioneering the art of commercial cultural tourism. His "*Indian Detours*" were meant to provide an authentic Native American experience by having actors stage a certain lifestyle in the desert in order to sell tickets to unwitting tourists. Fred Harvey's feats of marketing did not stop at the attraction either, as for tour guides, he used attractive women in outfits becoming their figures. This same tactic was adapted to his Harvey Houses as well. Fred Harvey was also a postcard publisher, touted as "*...the best way to promote your Hotel or Restaurant.*" Most postcards were published

in co-operation with the Detroit Publishing Company. Their Arizona "*Phostint*" postcards are collected often, although these changed over time.

Typical terms of employment for the girls was \$17.50 per month, room and board furnished, and they kept their tips (which were usually very high). Each was expected to stay at least a year, but this was usually waived.



San Marcial Harvey Girls in Park

As mentioned earlier, it was reported that a typical Harvey girl in the southwest lasted only six months before she married and settled down with a rancher or mine owner, engineer, conductor, station agent, etc. Their first son was almost always named Fred (in one area, 4000 babies were christened Fred or Harvey or both.) Overall, it is estimated 5000 to 20,000 Harvey girls became western wives.

Harvey Houses clearly brought customers to the ATSF. They may not have all been profitable, but they were all measured by how much business they brought to the RR. For example, in trying to reduce losses at one Harvey House, the manager reduced food portions and reduced losses, but was fired by Harvey for reducing quality. In discussing the early success of the Harvey business, one of his sons in 1921 said:

*"Of course, the opportunity to increase immediate profits by letting down on service grew as the business established itself. After the Florence Hotel got under way, for example, and people were talking about it, and more business was coming its way than it could handle, there was the usual opportunity to cash in on the good reputation to shade down the service and shade up the prices. My father was very well aware of this opportunity of course, but he also saw in the situation a peculiar opportunity to build good will. People would be expecting him to let down a little in his care for their interests under all this prosperity. And he saw that if he did not let them down then, they would notice it and appreciate it all the more, they would feel all the more that they could rely on his service. And again he did not let them down."*

## Typical Souvenirs from the San Marcial Harvey House



Rose Glass



Leather Post Cards



Engraved Silver  
Spoon

## LIFE IN SAN MARCIAL

Life in San Marcial was generally quite pleasant. The town had most of the features that any American town of its size might have at the time. The center of life, of course, was the railroad.



Touring with the San Marcial Motoring Club

San Marcial had a roundhouse, railcar and engine repair shops, carpenter shops, blacksmith shops and staff and

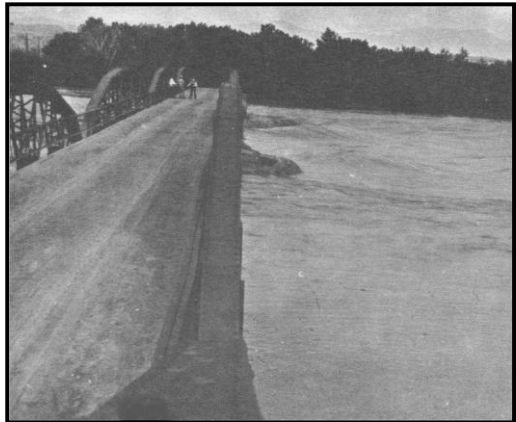


Main Road into San Marcial  
in 1920's

equipment for the headquarters of a major railroad division. The monthly railroad payroll exceeded \$25,000, a considerable sum in those days. The town also had a flour mill, electric light plant, electric street lights, sidewalks, good schools and

several churches. San Marcial boasted three newspapers in its history: the Reporter, Bee, and Standard. San Marcial even had a Driving Park Association and an Opera House. By 1906, four mercantile firms supported the local cattle and sheep business. Local ranches ran a good hunting trade, inviting people from the East to visit and hunt game in the nearby hills. All San Marcial went to the San Marcial (Harvey) House on New Year's for the Phantom Ball. The town also left its mark far away during World War I: Samuel Cuellan from San Marcial was wounded in action and Herminio Gallegos was killed in action.

One of the area ranchers, Pablo Gomez, had donated land in San Marcial for a Catholic church. It was eagerly built by the area families and was designated a mission church to Socorro in 1880.



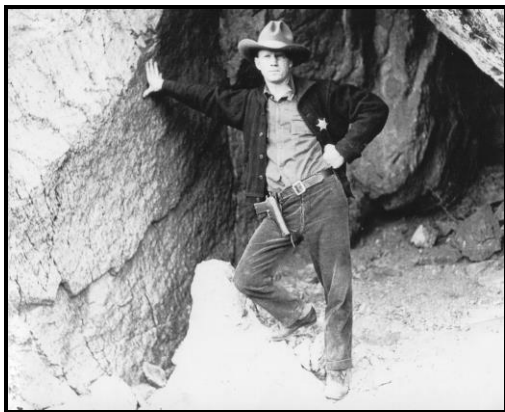
Bridge to Valverde from San Marcial

By 1887, the growing church was redesignated to a parish and received its own priest to serve San Marcial and the surrounding communities. In the early 1900s, Father Peter Peltzer was assigned to the San Marcial parish, serving the mission churches in the area. This included the missions at Paraje, Valverde, San Pedro, San Antonito, San Antonio, and Bosquecito. Additionally, the Padre offered Mass in private homes or schools at Milligan Ranch, Cantarecio, Carthage and Pueblitos. All

of these towns and villages were assigned to the San Marcial parish.

Crime was occasionally an issue. In June 1881, Charles Walker, city marshal of San Marcial, was killed by a Paddy Ryan. Later, Dave Rudabaugh and his gang terrorized the town for a while. However, San Marcial had its vigilantes who worked with similar groups in Socorro and were generally effective in keeping the peace.

By 1929, there were 2,000 acres of crops on the east side of the river at La Mesa and Valverde, and 1,250 acres of crops in San Marcial. The area had a population of ~2500 including Old San Marcial and Valverde, with New San Marcial listed at 1400.



C. W. Orr, Sherriff of Socorro County

Perhaps the best narrative of life in San Marcial was provided by Lenore Dils who first came to San Marcial from Albuquerque in 1919 to take a job as a stenographer working for the Division headquarters of the AT&SF.



Upon her arrival by train (of course), she observed the new town where she would live over the next ten years:



Railroad Avenue Looking North

*"San Marcial's main street...was about two blocks long... a wide, dusty, unpaved road with business establishments on one side and ragged cottonwood trees on the other.*

*"At this time of mid-afternoon, the street was almost deserted. A Ford Model T stood in front of a brick-fronted adobe building on one corner. It bore a sign: 'Botica, San Marcial Drug Company.' North of this store a large flat-bottomed wagon moved slowly. On it were some bales of hay and a mound of coal. (She would learn later that this belonged to Jules Grandjean, one of the Grandjean brothers, prominently identified with the town.)*

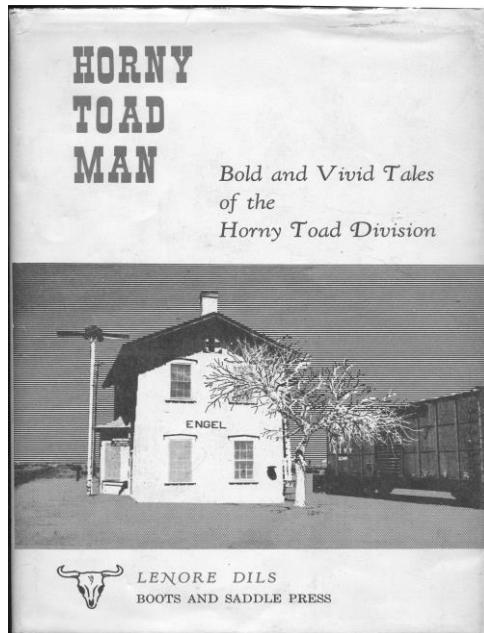


Downtown San Marcial Looking South

*"In front of another building, marked 'Armstrong's Saloon' stood two horses at the hitching rack. In front of a building nearby was a sign so faded as to be almost indistinguishable, where a man sat propped back against the wall. This was the constable, Ishmael Ortega, someone said. He was there to see that no lawmen or irate wives interrupted the persons inside the building, many of whom were gambling in the back room.*

*"A black-shawled Mexican woman, and the gaunt dog sleeping beside the constable were the only other living things to be seen.*

*" The business places on the block included the S. G. Hanna Mercantile. Nearby was a small, drab gray building, with an American flag hanging limply from a short pole, evidently the Post Office, then a building that bore the sign Horney Toad Smoke Shop...and the 'e' was left in....*



*The next block north had a well-built brick building on the corner. This was the San Marcial Bank, further north was a hotel, a garage, the Salome Mercantile owned by Sam and Fred Salome... There was a rooming and boarding house in a run-down condition and two more saloons, with gambling tables in the back."*

Further, she described her new working environment, amidst the clerical staff serving the everyday needs of the Division Headquarters, located on the second floor of the terminal building:

*"She...went up the rubber covered stairs leading to the offices over the depot. The offices which she*

*entered were, she judged, about forty feet long, and they were lined on both sides with rows of big desks, at which sat clerks and stenographers. In the center of the office was another giant desk behind which Mr. Lane seated himself, drawing toward him a stack of papers. When she entered, he half rose, called to the office boy Fay Webster, and asked him to conduct her to a corner desk in the rear, where sat her new boss, who seemed a morose chap, blocky in build, with dark brown hair. He was chewing vigorously on the end of the biggest cigar she had ever seen."*

Lenore Dils would go on to document much about life in San Marcial and on the Railroad in her book "Horny Toad Man". This excellent book has been out of print for years but is well respected in frontier New Mexico literary circles. If you ever have a chance to buy a copy, expect to pay dearly for it; but it will be a worthwhile investment.



Cleaning up From Train Wrecks and Sand Bagging against washouts and floods were Common Duties of San Marcial "Horny Toad" Railroad Men



## HUNTING AND TOURISM



Although San Marcial lacked most of the tourist attractions of the Indian Lands up in central and northern New Mexico, there were still plenty of opportunities to develop a small tourist industry based on hunting and fishing. The eastern hunting enthusiast was attracted to San Marcial because of its access to wilderness areas that were teeming with wild game. Ease of access via

the railroad brought numerous hunters to the various ranches in and around the area.



## NOTABLE SAN MARCIAL RESIDENTS

**William Palmer, Jr** of San Marcial was the inventor of the automatic pressure retaining valve used with the Westinghouse quick action air brake. But he was just one of several famous or well-known San Marcialians:

### THE CRAWFORD FAMILY



Cap'n Jack Crawford in Alaska

John W. Crawford (1840-1917), was known as "*Captain Jack, The Poet Scout*".

"Captain Jack" had a colorful career in the Old West, beginning when he is said to have been one of the first seven men to enter the Black Hills region after the ill-fated Custer expedition. During the Sioux Wars of 1876, "*Captain Jack*" was a scout in New Mexico and also a special agent of the Indian Bureau near San Marcial on the Rio Grande River.

Crawford, from Ireland, came to the U.S. in 1847 and fought in the Civil War. Story has it he arrived in the US at age 7 still wearing his kilts. He worked first in a coal mine in Pennsylvania and later was able to enlist in the Union Army during the Civil War (although he was still younger than was required). He was wounded 2 times and, while recovering, was taught to read and write by one of his nurses. Crawford is thought to have arrived in

the Black Hills shortly after the Custer Massacre. He became chief of scouts for the Black Hills Rangers, an irregular organization. Crawford served as scout and messenger for Merritt and Crook in the 1876 Big Horn and Yellowstone expedition. He seems always to have been fairly honest and reliable in his duties.

By the late 1870s he had become well known as a composer and reciter of verses. His renown during his life was considerable. He was tall, thin, wore his hair and beard trimmed as did Buffalo Bill Cody. He was a friend of Buffalo Bill Cody and even was part of Cody's Wild West Show.



Captain Jack (Right) with Buffalo Bill and Queen Victoria in this Mural at the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody Wyoming



A story has it that, whenever Captain Jack was preparing to depart to some event, he would always comb back his long hair, put on his buckskins, and present himself to his wife Maria. When he asked her how he looked, she would usually reply, "Silly!".

Much of Captain Jack's career in New Mexico was centered on Fort Craig. In addition to various scouting duties, he served a time as fort postmaster and post trader. In 1882, he opened the "Scouts' Hotel" near the fort and marketed it as "The soldier's home and bivouac, the miner's safe retreat."

He established a ranch at San Marcial on the Rio Grande in New Mexico in 1886 and made that his headquarters for most of the remainder of his life, although he had a home in Brooklyn.

After Fort Craig closed, Captain Jack was made caretaker of the buildings. He was assisted by his wife Maria, who once had been a cook at the fort.

He and Maria had two children, a son Harry who worked first as a cowboy, then later transferred his skill to being a conductor on the AT&SF, and a daughter whom Captain Jack named May Cody Crawford in honor of his good friend Bill Cody. May Crawford would become a central figure in San Marcial, first as a Harvey Girl, then later as the School Teacher. As the following picture of one of her hunting parties shows, May was a good frontier person like her father.

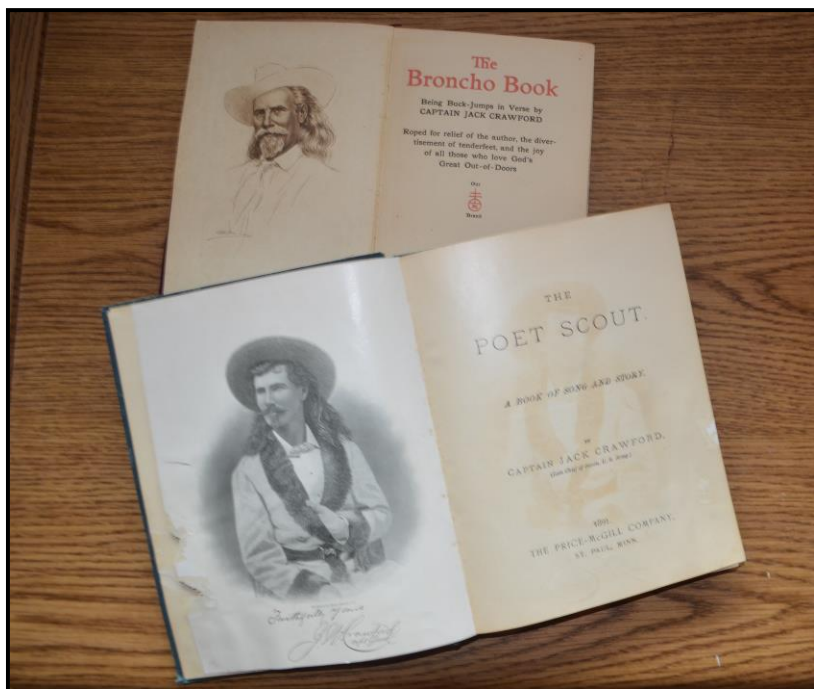


Crawford Family Saw Mill in San Marcial



Ladies Hunting (Mayta Nantis, May Crawford and Friend)

During all this time, Jack Crawford was turning out books of poetry and novels which were well received by the readership of the era. His best-known work, The Broncho Book, was a collection of poems about the frontier way of life. His notoriety made him a regular feature in Buffalo Bill's shows and even landed him in the Court of Queen Victoria during Buffalo Bill's tour of England.



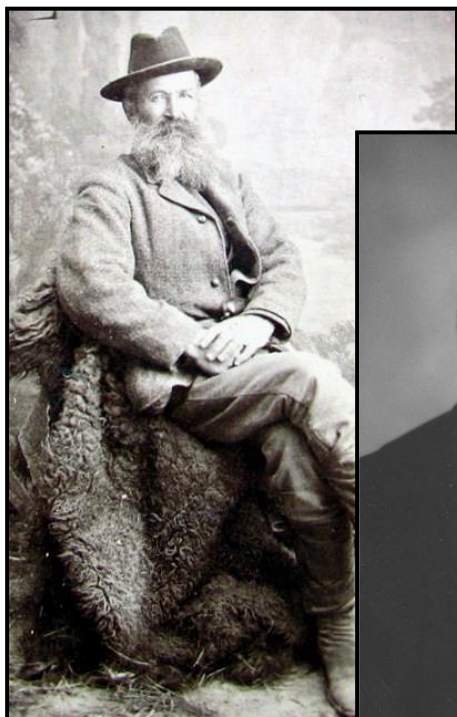
*The Broncho Book and Poet Scout by Captain Jack Crawford*

Captain Jack attended the Chicago Fair in 1893, accompanied by a small band of plains Indians. In the Studebaker Exhibit at the fair was a very prized exhibit, featuring the original coach owned by Lafayette, the Revolutionary War hero. Unfortunately, the building housing the exhibit caught fire and the coach was likely to

be lost forever. However, the Poet Scout from New Mexico and his Indian companions rushed into the burning building and dragged the coach to safety. In appreciation, the Studebaker Company sent May Crawford a pony car and harness, which she could use to ride between Fort Craig and San Marcial.

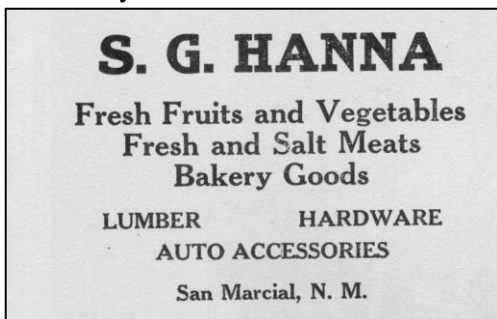
This man had quite an illustrious life and died in Brooklyn in 1917.

Captain Jack Crawford and Daughter May Cody Crawford



## THE HANNAS

Newcomers to San Marcial migrated from all over – the deep south, plains of Kansas and Nebraska, the West Coast, New England, the Midwest, and many from Missouri. Regardless of their place of origin, or stations in life, everyone met on the level at Hanna's Mercantile. This



emporium was presided over by the affable Sam Hanna, a Pennsylvanian by birth, who had cast his lot early with the Santa Fe. Sam came to San Marcial as Water

Service Foreman, and his job was to tend to the many wells the railroad had spaced approximately every 30 miles along the route between Albuquerque and El Paso, more especially along the dreaded Jornada del Muerto. When the opportunity surfaced to purchase a grocery store in San Marcial from Edward C. Rockwell, (a charter member of Hiram Lodge), Sam hesitated only long enough to summon one of his brothers from Pennsylvania and qualify him in the mechanics of a water well tender. The grocery store prospered, and Sam expanded – adding hay, grain and ranch supplies, a bakery, lumber and hardware, a butcher shop – just about anything his many customers required. With each increase in his operation Sam needed additional help, and the nearest and most reliable source was the railroad. As each of his brothers was brought in from the field to work in the store Sam imported another from the Keystone State, always mindful of his obligation to keep the water wells in service. What was good for the

railroad was good for Sam. In due time, Sam ran out of brothers and began to press his sons into the business. Shortly after the new century began and automobiles came onto the scene, Sam was quick to realize the potential of fueling the new flivvers, (and the eventual decline in catering to the horse set), so he added a gasoline pump to his inventory. You may remember the type – gravity filled from a large glass reservoir on the top.



Alice Hanna (center) with friends on old pier.

The Hanna family continued to be lifelong San Marcial citizens, with seven members of the family buried in the old Masonic Cemetery.

- Mark D Hanna                      1898 to 1900
- Joseph Hanna                      1860 to 1908
- Louis K Hanna                      1852 to 1916
- Samuel G Hanna                      1856 to 1928
- William J Hanna                      1846 to 1929
- Gayle J Hanna                      1923 to 1929
- Minerva Hanna                      1871 to 1932

## MASONS AND THEIR CEMETERY

As the town grew, it needed a fitting place for the deceased among their citizens. There was a large cemetery of nearly 300 graves near Old San Marcial, but it was owned by the Catholic church and permitted no non-Catholic burials. The Ft Craig military cemetery was located about a quarter of a mile west of the catholic cemetery on top of a hill. It was nicknamed "Boot Hill Cemetery" by the Scouts. The graves in this cemetery are laid out in rows; unfortunately, most of these graves are unmarked. It was not considered appropriate to use the military cemetery for civilian burials.



Grave of Gayle Hanna, aged 6year old, who died between the first and second 1929 flood.

The earliest burials near San Marcial were on a small hill west of downtown. Eventually, the local Masonic Lodge would adopt the cemetery as its project. At some point, a white picket fence was erected around the area and an entrance was built facing east toward the town. Every year it was traditional for the Masons to give the fence a new coat of whitewash and to clean up areas within the fence.



The earliest graves within the fenced area were those of Victor Rouiller who died in 1880, and Georgie Rouiller (age 4) in 1888. Several other burials from between 1882



The Cemetery is Now Overgrown and Largely Forgotten

and 1886 are found outside the fence. Based on a survey of the grave markers, the cemetery was not used regularly until 1892. This is likely when the fence was first built. A list of the people buried in this cemetery is included at the end of this book.

The cemetery tells a lot about life in San Marcial. Of the 93 burials within the fenced area, over 10% are of children less than 2 years old and 30% of the burials represent people less than 20 years old. This cemetery has remained active even after San Marcial was gone, as there have been 14 additional burials after 1929 of family members associated with San Marcial. However, the cemetery is now overgrown with salt cedars and the fence has not seen a new coat of whitewash in at least 80 years.



## EARTHQUAKES AND FIRES AND FLOODS, OH MY!

Although life in San Marcial was pleasant and civilized, it was not free from the forces of Mother Nature and man-made disasters, including earthquakes, fires, and, of course, floods.



ATSF Staff Housing during a "Mild" Flood

The earliest reported earthquake in the state happened on April 20, 1855 near Socorro, according to the USGS. Overall, about half of New Mexico's historical *seismicity* has occurred in the region between Socorro and Albuquerque. Beginning on July 2, 1906 (does that year ring a bell? - think San Francisco), and lasting well into 1907, the area was affected by shocks almost daily. There were three fairly severe shocks in this series. The first, New Mexico's biggest earthquake ever, occurred in Socorro County on July 12, 1906 - a shocker that shook

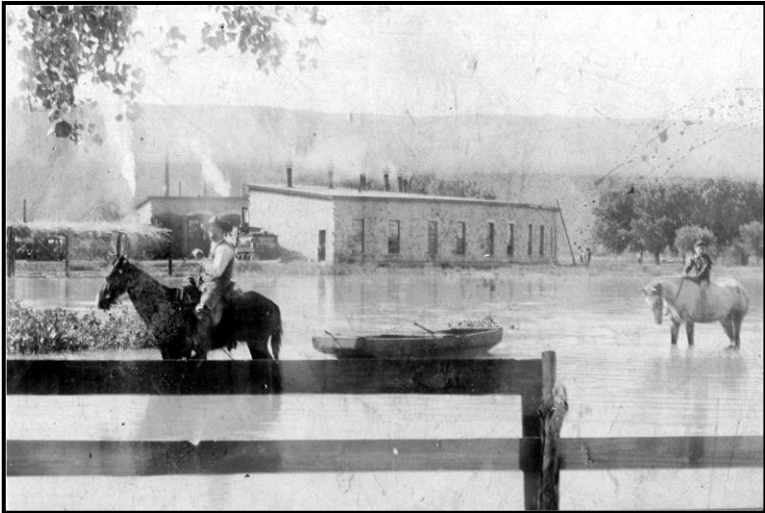
four chimneys off the county courthouse in Socorro and cracked two others, knocked a cornice off the two-story adobe Masonic Temple in Socorro and knocked bricks off the front of one house. That quake -- recorded at Intensity VII -- also shook plaster off the walls in Santa Fe, some 200 miles from the epicenter, and was felt around most of New Mexico and even in parts of Arizona and Texas. Ground fissures and visible waves on the surface were reported with this earthquake. Later, on November 15, 1906, a second intensity VII shock was felt over an area of about 250,000 square kilometers. Rumbling sounds were heard during this earthquake. Later shocks occurred near Socorro on July 18, 1913 (intensity V), January 31, 1919 (Intensity IV-V), and February 1, 1919 (intensity V). A February 22 1914 earthquake was felt only in San Marcial.



In all cities and towns of the era, nothing created more fear and panic than fire. The combination of wooden buildings in close proximity to each other was always a recipe for disaster. No sooner had the new town began to grow than, in July of 1881, it was nearly totally destroyed by fire. In November, the town was only back to five

stores and two saloons. Eventually, the town was rebuilt and grew to a community of a thousand residents and became the center for agricultural and irrigation projects. However, in May 1893 fire again struck and wiped out one block of businesses, consisting of several stores, lodging houses, three saloons and the opera house. All the chairs and scenery were saved from the opera house, and the Odd Fellows also saved their property that was normally stored at the opera house. Especially notable to the locals was the destruction of "forty large shade trees".

For years, the Rio Grande was called the "*Nile of the Southwest*" due to its nearly annual spring floods. Old Socorro newspapers indicate that major floods prior to 1920 were reported in 1881, 1884, 1889, 1890, 1895 and 1911. In the early 1900s, construction of dams along the Rio Grande had begun to control the annual spring-runoff



Fields Flooded from 1895 Flood

flooding. The Rio Grande dam in Colorado was the first to be built (1914), followed by Elephant Butte, which was

built in 1916 - 1921. Later came the dams at Caballo and San Acacio (today, mysteriously, it is called San Acacia) and others. South of San Marcial were several small farming communities: Cantarecio, Paraje, San Albino, San Jose and Bosque Bonito. These villages were built on bends along the Rio Grande, a common practice for harnessing water for irrigation. The only problem with this method was high river water would flood the acequias and hence, the town. Eventually, these towns were ordered condemned and evacuated in 1917 for the construction of Elephant Butte Dam. In a few more years, these towns



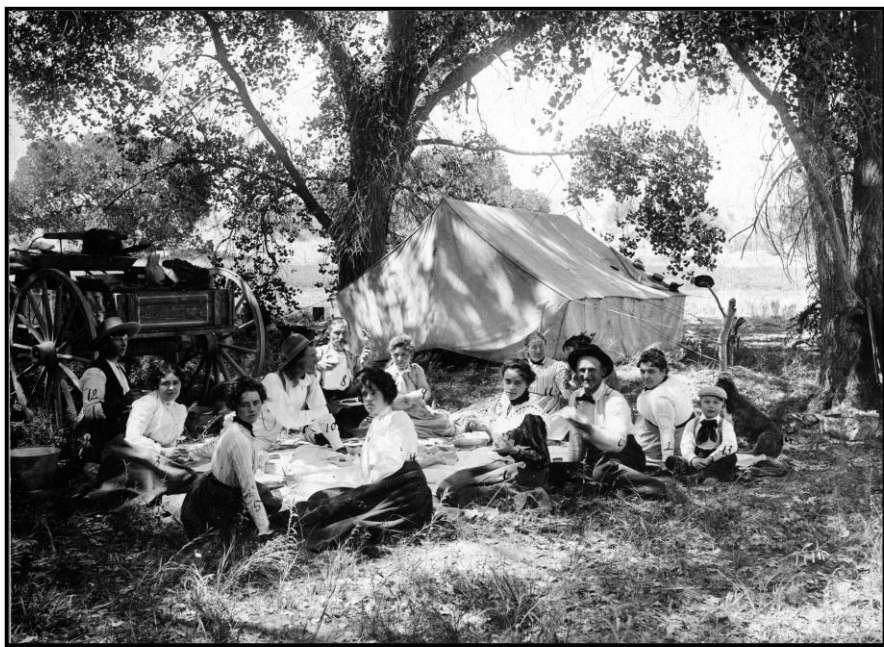
Flooding South of Roundhouse

would be under the waters of Elephant Butte Lake. Many of the families moved to San Marcial or Valverde, to build new farms and new lives.

As Elephant Butte Dam was nearing completion, a huge flood along the Rio Grande inundated San Marcial, La Mesa and Valverde in 1920. Crops, farmlands, businesses, homes, and the AT&SF railroad tracks and yards were heavily damaged. Farther downstream, those who remained at the villages of Cantaricio to San Albino found themselves homeless. Following this flood, the state engineer spent thousands of dollars repairing the levees and other flood control work around San Marcial. The people were assured that floods were a "*thing of the past*" with the new levees and dams along the Rio Grande. However, the real villain, the accumulation of sediment at the bottom of the river as the water slowed down behind the dam, was only being enhanced.



Three San Marcial ladies in front of the Crawford Home that is raised from the ground to protect against flood damage



Crawford Family and friends enjoying a Family Picnic Under the Trees  
near Fort Craig (Cap'n Jack is 4th from the left)

## THE END OF SAN MARCIAL

The 1929 Fourth of July celebration in San Marcial was festive and full of families and fun. Work everywhere was stopped for a time, including at the flour mill and on the new parish church near the train station. Some families had made the jaunt to the other side of the river toward Valverde to enjoy the cool shade of the trees. Others had picnics or went to the Harvey House for a special meal. There was a parade, as had been the tradition, with cowboys on horses showing off their finest saddles and gear; and a few newer motorcars with “dignitaries” rumbled by. A few speeches were made from the grandstand in the park. Everyone had a good time, not knowing this would be the last time that San Marcial would be able to celebrate being a community.



Preparing for a Typical Fourth of July Parade in  
San Marcial

The first blow would come quite soon. Around July 11, we know that the master of the Masonic lodge, Walter M. Durham, "*called attention to the moving of several brothers from San Marcial and requested those brothers who were staying to do their best to keep this lodge going as in the past.*" Several of the brothers present at this communication gave short pep talks on the necessity for everyone to place their "*shoulder to the wheel*" [from the history of Hiram Lodge]. The movement referred to took place on July 20th when the Santa Fe Railway relocated its Division Headquarters to Albuquerque, taking with it 21 of the 35 Lodge members, including the Master, Junior Warden, Secretary, Marshall, Junior Deacon and Tyler. Although the Division Headquarters relocation only directly affected the various managers and supervisors who had been based in San Marcial, it meant the loss of many support jobs, such as clerks and typists and reduced the overall railroad payroll considerably.



## THE AUGUST FLOOD

Just over three weeks later, the second blow would come from Mother Nature. What happened next cannot be told any better than the original words from the Aug. 17, 1929, Socorro Chieftain:



*"Flooded Rio Grande Devastates Entire Towns; People Escape in Night Clothes — The first disaster occurring at 2:00 o'clock Tuesday morning (Aug. 13) when the highway bridge at San Acacia gave way sending a five foot flood through the town, giving many only time to escape to the foot hills to the west in their night clothes."*

*"Orchards, alfalfa fields with other valley crops in this district as well as at Polvadero and Lemitar are reported a total loss. From San Acacia to Lemitar, the water was spread out on both sides of the railroad three miles from bank to bank."*

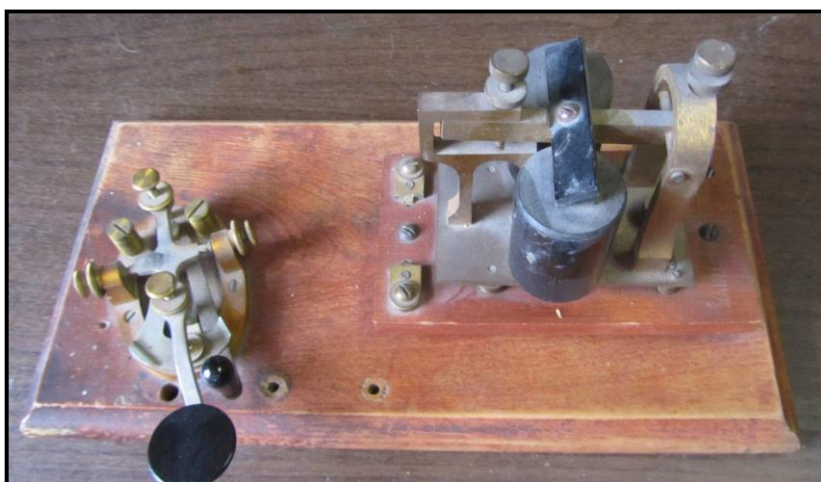


A later report, prepared by the Rio Grande District of the USDA Soil Conservation Service and published in 1937, noted that the river bed had risen some 8 feet at San Marcial between 1880 and 1930 due to the deposition of silt, raising the bed above the level of the surrounding land in places, with only the levees holding it back. Then, on Aug. 10-12, 1929, extremely heavy rains in Socorro County quickly filled the river. By late evening on Aug. 12, the Rio Grande began to overflow its banks at San Acacia, with floodwaters working their way toward



Railroad Bridge and River at Flood Stage

Socorro. In the meantime, runoff pouring down the arroyos above San Marcial forced the town to break open the levees to the south so the runoff could drain into the Rio Grande. Unfortunately, a greater deluge was coming down the river from the north; and when it reached the chokepoint at Black Mesa, the water and silt backed up through the levee breaks and flooded the town to a depth of 4 to 8 feet. A large amount of mud was deposited in the town, and many buildings built of adobe simply dissolved.



Thanks to the railroad telegraphers, no lives were lost.

When the flood surprised San Acacia, word reached Socorro and San Marcial over the telegraph lines, allowing ample time for evacuations down river. Thanks to the railroad telegraphers, no lives were lost. The AT&SF railroad brought up numerous trains from El Paso to evacuate the people from San Marcial — the most vulnerable place along the Rio Grande. The roundhouse was used for quickly turning the engines around for the trip back to the south. Most families were thereby able to flee by train or escape to higher ground. Those that didn't

took refuge on the second floors of the depot and Harvey House, which thankfully were solid enough to withstand the flood. With women and children safely out of town, men at San Marcial were fighting in the midst of crumbling structures in a last desperate effort to save their town from total destruction. However, by the next morning the town was submerged up to the second floor of some of the buildings. New Town San Marcial, La Mesa and Valverde were completely destroyed, including the new parish church under construction near the train station.

The railroad yards and workshops were filled with several feet of silt; the bank, mercantile stores and even the Harvey House were collapsing into the muck.

Furthermore, with the highway and railroad tracks destroyed and covered with mud, there was no way back into the town. Every locomotive had been gotten out of town but one, 2-8-0 Baldwin Engine 1859. An engineer ran it up on the ramp of the Clifton coal chute in an attempt to save it. However, during the night, the ramp collapsed, dumping the engine on its side. It could not be salvaged.



Engine 1859 was a twin of the 1833 Baldwin Engine in this Picture.

Even the Masons were scrambling to save what they could. The night before, during the peak of the flooding, Frank A. Armstrong was able to salvage most Lodge records and succeeded in transferring them to Marshall H. Van

Coeverden's room on the 2nd floor of the Harvey House, one of the few dry places in town. The, next morning, George L. Machen, Secretary of Hiram Lodge, with the help of some local people, dug around in the debris of the lodge building and uncovered all the old Minute Books and some other records which were not rescued the night before. Then all the records, including those from Coeverden's room in the Harvey House, were transferred to Albuquerque by truck for safe keeping. In his report to the Grand Lodge on October 11, Brother Machen stated *"the newspaper reports of great suffering are greatly exaggerated"*, but he did confirm that this latest flood had *"entirely destroyed the town of San Marcial and it is beyond hope of rebuilding."* He went on to say that the hall of Hiram Lodge *"was completely destroyed together with our furniture and the greater part of our paraphernalia."*

A week after the flood (Aug 19), New Mexico Gov. Richard Dillon visited Socorro, issuing the following statement: *"The need for a whole-hearted response from the people of New Mexico is more apparent than ever. The survey has shown that there are approximately 1,500 people who have suffered from the flood. There are 200 homes entirely ruined, leaving their owners without shelter, and it can be said with very little exaggeration that there are practically no crops left between LaJoya and San Marcial."*

A damage assessment of the town of San Marcial showed more than \$1,000,000 in damage (quite a sum in 1929). As soon as the waters receded the townspeople that were left turned out *en masse* to clean up. The citizens were totally confident that no river was going to drive them from their homesteads, in spite of the town site now being nearly 10 feet below the bed of the adjacent Rio Grande. The Albuquerque Journal, in its August 22 issue,

announced that "SAN MARCIAL'S PEOPLE START REBUILDING THEIR HOMES".



Many Feet of Silt Stood in the Way of Rebuilding San  
Marcial

## THE SEPTEMBER FLOOD

As the water slowly drained out, the town began to rebuild. However, over the period of Sept. 21-23, heavy monsoon rains, then called "seasonal cloudbursts," drenched the state. These rains started over the San Luis Valley in Colorado. Floodwaters barreled down the Rio Grande and caused massive flooding in Albuquerque and Belen on Sept. 23. Heavy rains in the mountains west of Socorro caused the Rio Salado and other arroyos to severely overflow the Rio Grande in Socorro County on Sept. 24.

The Sept. 28, 1929, Socorro Chieftain again tells the story:

***"Second Flood Hits This Section; San Marcial and San Acacia Part of River — A flood that occurred at 9:00 o'clock, and a second at 11:00 o'clock Monday morning, with the Rio Grande, breaking its banks at a point just a short distance above San Acacia, swept away railroad tracks and broke dykes [and] has caused a property loss of millions of dollars in the flooded district which reached from San Acacia on the north to and below San Marcial on the south.***

*"This, the second flood to occur in this part of the Rio Grande valley within a month, has proved the most disastrous catastrophe to have happened within the history of the valley. Not a house is left standing in San Acacia.*

*"San Antonio to the south was badly hit when the dyke broke sending a flood of two feet high into the main street. Continuing on its rampage, the high*

*waters are said to have reached a mile north of San Marcial at 5:30 Tuesday afternoon when the dyke broke sending a wall of water eight feet deep through the main street of the town. This added to the water that had been backing up from the south since Sunday."*



Road South towards Old Town San Marcial

Additionally, with U.S. Highway 85 under several feet of water, all of the towns along the river, including Socorro, were virtually stranded from the outside world. Railroad tracks were also washed out, as reported in the Socorro Chieftain: *"With miles and miles of track washed out in Monday's disastrous flood, caused by high water of the Rio Grande, Socorro has been without either mail or telegraph service for six days, and from indications it will be weeks before train service can be restarted over this division of the A.T. & S.F."*



As the water level rose many people, both customers and employees, were trapped on the second floor of the Harvey House. There were no formal rescue teams at that time, and the trapped folks were in great danger. On that day along the banks of the Rio Grande there were many spectators watching the situation getting worse as the



Finding Refuge at the Harvey House

water level kept getting higher and higher. The hotel structure was beginning to break and many parts of the building started to float away. Unfortunately, whatever small boats that had been in the city had already been swept away by the raging river. As one witness related:

*Among the many spectators there was one young vaquero (cowboy). The vaquero had many horses, one of which had been trained to swim. In the past, after a hard summer day's work, he had enjoyed*

*going into the river along with his horse to cool off and play.*

*The shouts of "help us please" coming from the people on the second floor of the hotel motivated the vaquero to rescue the people. He mounted his horse, named Chapo, and swam to the hotel. He brought the first victim to the bank of the river, and thereafter made many trips to the hotel; each time bringing back another person to safety. Among the many people he rescued that day was a young girl by the name of Judy Serna, a cousin to the vaquero.*

*The young vaquero that risked his life that day to save the people from a dangerous situation was Felix Barreras (1903-1990).*

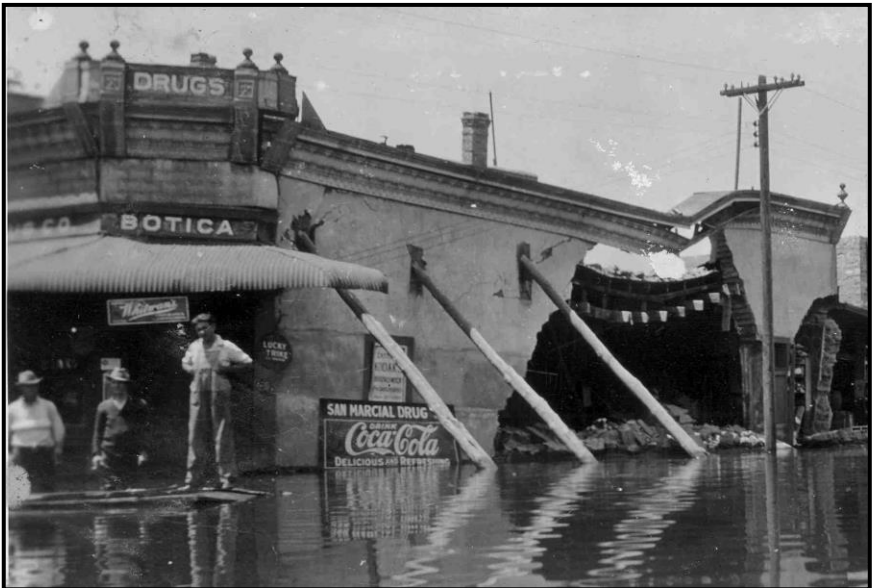
In San Marcial, New Town, the modern town by the river and the railroad, was inundated. This second flood finished off the town. The roundhouse had been directly in the path of one of the levee breaks, and several walls collapsed. High water marks visible in post-flood photos of the depot and Harvey House indicate another 4-5 foot inundation, with at least a foot of mud left behind. In other parts of the town, houses were buried to the eaves in silt. A photo of the ruined roundhouse in Horny Toad Man shows several people standing in one of the four remaining stall doorways. Taking the tallest man to be about 6-feet tall, the opening that had once been tall enough to admit steam locomotives was now no more than 9-feet high thanks to all the mud.

Herbert Yeo, who worked for the State Engineer's Office, reported of this second flood, "*Very little additional damage was done ... as the first flood had destroyed*

*everything which water could damage."* As mentioned previously, he estimated the damage to San Marcial at \$1 million (1929 money), not counting the damages suffered by the AT&SF railroad.



Overview of Flooded San Marcial  
Drug Store During Flood





Two Kids Out for an Afternoon "Sail"

Harvey House After Flood (Note Child in Water Hole in Foreground)





Auto Touring during Flood

A Group of San Marcialians Inspecting Damage



## THE FINAL BLOW

Only one month later, the stock market crashed and the country slid into the decade-long Great Depression. Jobs were scarce. Most of the people along the river had to rebuild their homes, their farms and their lives with little outside assistance. The floods financially ruined hundreds of families. Even before the stock market crash of 1929, the American and European economies were not as healthy as they had been. In particular, agricultural profits lagged far behind industrial profits, and this affected railroads like the AT&SF which depended on transporting and distributing the bounty of the countryside. On top of this, the *Dust Bowl* created by the drought of 1930 turned much of the fertile farmland served by the AT&SF into a wasteland where emergency shipping rates had to be imposed to permit farmers and ranchers to transport their livestock out of the *Dust Bowl* for whatever values could be received for them elsewhere. After that, there was essentially nothing for the AT&SF to move from its once "cash cow".

## AFTERMATH

The state engineer and the Bureau of Reclamation also arrived to inspect the river, levees and diversion channels and tried to figure out what went wrong. These agencies recorded in their final report, "*There are no records, however, which show such widespread and heavy rains as those which occurred on September 21st, 22nd, and 23rd over the entire Rio Grande drainage area ... and there is likewise no record, authentic or by word of mouth, of a flood which has approached the magnitude of the one which swept through the Socorro Valley on September 23rd and 24th, 1929.*"

The floodwaters at San Marcial had no place to drain off. Parts of New Town San Marcial remained under water throughout the winter. In October, the railroad began to salvage what they could and relocated the 60 families (nearly 500 people) of shop and roundhouse workers to Belen, Albuquerque and El Paso. San Marcial's largest employer was gone. Another 130 families, not associated with the railroad, were left homeless. **San Marcial was simply no more.**

As a side note, shortly after the September flood, the Army Corps of Engineers arrived at San Marcial and recovered the safe from the San Marcial Bank. The recovered money was divided among those who had accounts with the bank. (*This was before FDIC Insurance*). The following year, fields were planted and cattle freely roamed the former town site, now filled with grass and growing tamarisk. Still, the population of the area, estimated to be around 2,500 in 1929, had shrunk to about 600 by the 1930 census

Most of the area, now covered with thickets of tamarisk from the 1929 flood, was left with little farmable land. What cleared land was left was now covered with several feet of worthless silt, as was the town sites of Old Town and San Geronimo. Over the next couple of months, the remaining dwelling's soggy adobe walls collapsed under the weight of the roofs until virtually nothing was left standing. It was the final kiss of death for San Marcial.

The division point was abolished, the roundhouse was abandoned, and most of the employees were reassigned to Belen, NM or El Paso, TX. Also, The Harvey House was closed and demolished.

## FOLLOWING YEARS

Not all of San Marcial was destroyed in 1929. About a mile to the west was the original town, called La Plaza Viejo, or Old Town, and the village of San Geronimo. This area received extensive damage due to standing water, but did not experience the destructive currents of the



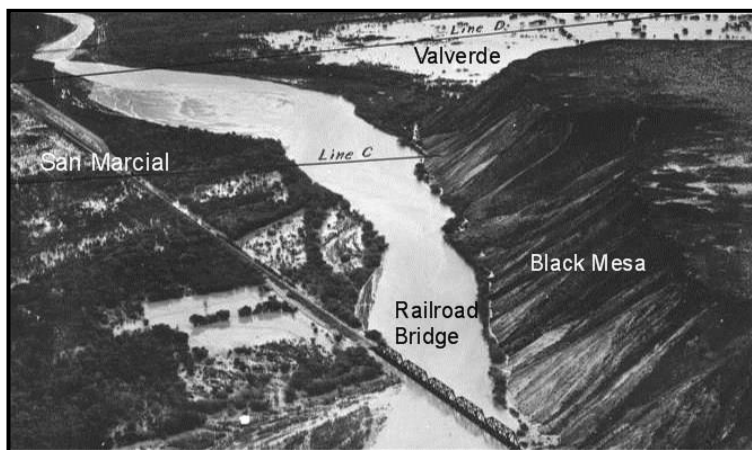
floodwaters that destroyed New Town San Marcial. The several hundred people who remained joined together and rebuilt Old Town and San Geronimo.

In 1936, the Santa Fe picked up and moved the depot building south to Hatch, NM. The depot and office building, originally two-stories measuring 30x92 with a 30x48 1-story freight extension, was reduced to a single story, 30x61 depot.

After the 1929 river improvements, the Bureau of Reclamation estimated the Rio Grande could now tolerate 12,000 cubic-feet per minute before breaching its banks and levees. The flood of 1929 was considered the worst



in New Mexico's history. However, eight years later, the mighty Rio Grande roared again. In 1937, more than 35,000 cubic-feet per minute, or three times the flood stage, roared down the Rio Grande into the Socorro valley. During this flood, hundreds of homes, ranches and farms were again sitting in several feet of water. There was a virtual lake more than 2 miles wide extending from Bernardo to San Marcial. Polvadera and Lemitar were especially hard hit. A break in the levee northeast of Polvadera sent rushing waters through the area, destroying the nearby village of Chimisal. Little remains of Chimisal today, except for the old school house and a few crumbling adobe structures. Much of Polvadera was also destroyed.





Railroad Roundhouse and Old San Marcial, 1937 Flood





New Parish Church in Old San Marcial Destroyed by 1937

In Socorro, the deep floodwaters stopped at the railroad tracks, elevated by AT&SF following the 1896 flood. Still, water rushed down Manzanares Street, which flooded the Plaza and other areas. The most damaging aspect of this flood was again at San Marcial. The residents of Old Town and San Geronimo watched as the river overflowed its banks and flooded the San Marcial area. Again, it was a double whammy. Floodwaters from the river flowed into the valley to the north, while the overflowing Elephant Butte Reservoir back-flowed into San Marcial from the south. By being flooded from two directions at once, several feet of water quickly covered the streets of the two villages, including the old El Camino Real.

Once the floodwaters receded, area ranchers rebuilt the soaked mission at La Plaza Vieja. Building of the new church was also restarted, and it was dedicated on May 10, 1937. Unfortunately, only a few months later, another disastrous flood down the Rio Grande destroyed everything in the area, including the new parish church.

The San Marcial parish was discontinued, and the area missions were transferred back to the Socorro parish.

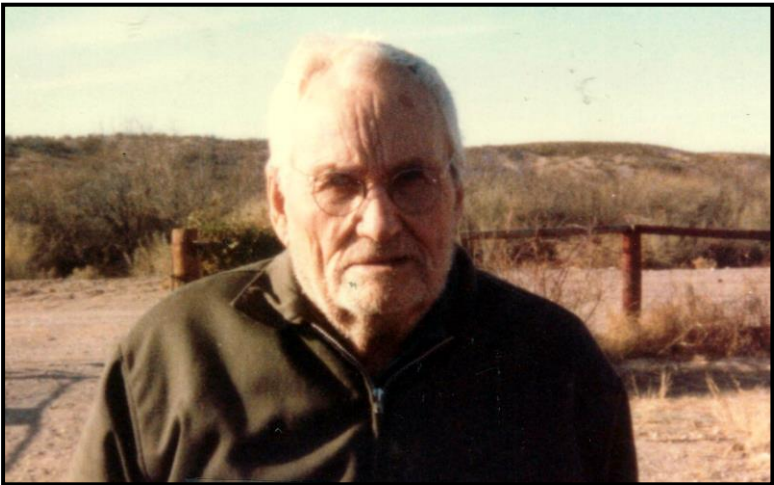
Subsequently the whole area was flooded to create Lake San Marcial, and only a few ruins and the cemetery remain today. The water tank and a bunkhouse for a section gang also remained, but without the division headquarters, roundhouse, and the jobs that went with it, and with agriculture less and less viable thanks to the floods and the changes in the river, there was little reason to rebuild the town of San Marcial.



Ruins of the Roundhouse Today (2019) Note line from 1937 still visible at the bottom of the picture.

## THE MARINA AND THE CANAL

After the floods had subsided and the area of San Marcial was flooded to create Lake San Marcial, an enterprising individual named Guy Hunter paid up the back taxes on most of the lots in what was San Marcial but which were now under water. Not all the lots had back taxes, particularly those which had been owned by the Hanna family; Gray Hanna made sure they were current. Regardless, Guy Hunter sent out summons papers to the owners of the 125 lots he had paid taxes on to get due



Guy Hunter

title. He apparently was successful, because he and his family were able to run a Marina from the shores of Lake San Marcial. They served a growing fishing business and were able to bring back some life to the area. However, in the early 1950's, the Corps of Engineers decided to drain Lake San Marcial and relocate the majority of the Rio Grande water flow in that area of the river to a concrete lined canal. The canal was eventually built down

the east side of the river, cutting the Hunters Marina off from access and essentially ending that venture. This resulted in a long lawsuit by Guy Hunter against the railroad and the government, which eventually was settled with the Hunters getting significant compensation.

During the building of the canal, Don Hunter, Guy's son and now the patriarch so to speak of the San Marcial remains, recalls that the canal diggers apparently dug right through what had been the basement of the Harvey House. The piles of dirt were littered with all sizes of china, much of it unbroken. Don carefully collected the good pieces and eventually donated them to a relative. Now, the area is seldom visited, except for people trying to find their way to the Ft Craig ruins and the occasional Masonic ceremony and cleanup project held in the old graveyard.

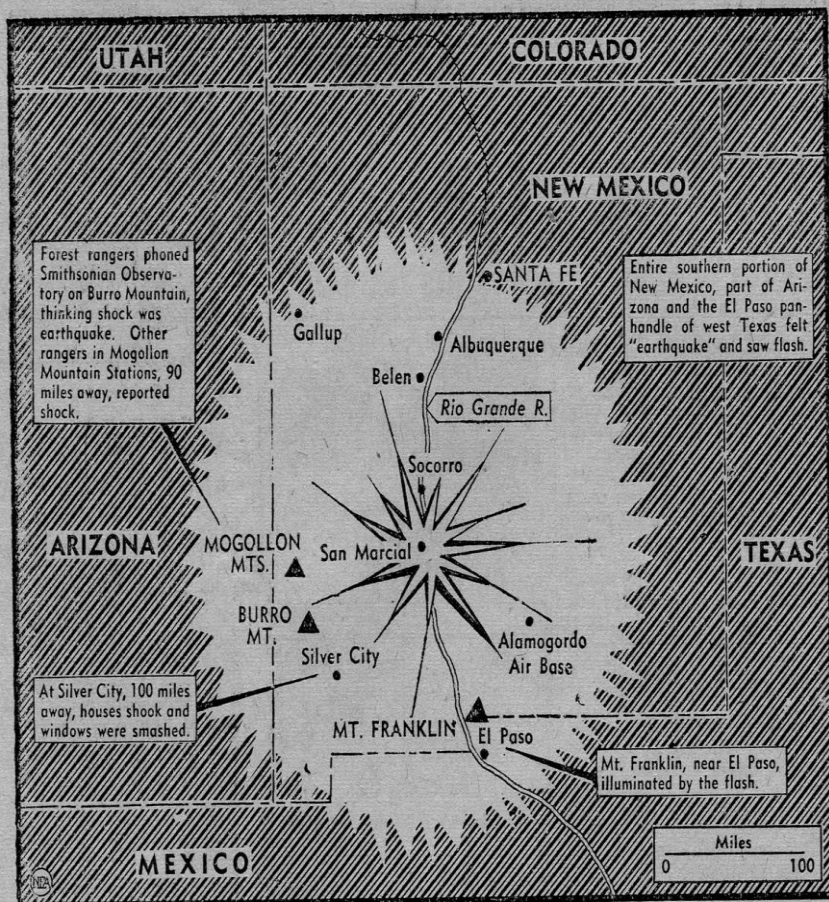


## THE FLASH AND BOOM

Just as it seemed as if *Our Place by the River* had seen it all, and was settling into a "slumber", it was once again the scene of another drama that unfolded on its doorstep. On July 16, 1945, just as the sun was coming over the bluffs of Black Mesa, a tremendous flash was seen by the few residents still left in the area. The flash was followed

### PALESTINE (TEXAS) HERALD AND PRESS

#### Where Atomic Bomb First Produced 'Earthquake'



Map above shows the wide area affected when the Army's new atomic bomb was first tested, on July 16, near the Alamogordo Air Base, New Mexico. Residents first thought it was an earthquake. To preserve military secrecy, they were told that an outlying munitions dump had exploded.

by a rumbling sound that grew in force until everyone was roused out of their beds to witness what none could guess was the beginning of a new age, the Atomic Age. The first atomic bomb had been detonated a scarce 25 miles away at what is now known of as Trinity site. None of those present at that time and place would ever forget that sound that was ominously like the sound of death.





## REUNIONS

There were several reunions of the San Marcial families in Albuquerque, Long Beach, CA and El Paso as well. The last one I know of was in 1947 and that is because of the



1941 Reunion in Albuquerque



1947 Reunion

pictures from that event. At almost twenty years after the floods eliminated San Marcial as a physical place, its memory was becoming too indistinct, perhaps. In her book, Lenore Dils took her last trip from El Paso to Albuquerque on the passenger train in 1965, shortly before all passenger traffic was discontinued on the Horney Toad route. Regardless, the San Marcial folk had their traditions and to close this discussion on *Just a Place by the River*, below is a poem offered many times by Alvin T Ash at memorial services for those from San Marcial who had passed away and for others just interested in history:



An Old Engine awaiting its Fate



In 1950, the street layouts of San Marcial were still visible below the flood waters.



The Railroad Bridge Today

## **MEN WHO DIED IN THIER OVERCLOTHES**

*Now that we have scattered the flowers of May  
Over the graves of the Blue and Gray,  
Over the graves where the women weep,  
Over the mounds where heroes sleep;  
Now let us turn to the graves of those  
Who have lived and died in their overclothes.*

*Are they not heroes? Have they not died,  
With their engines side by side?  
Have they not stood by the throttle and the brake,  
Gone down to death for their passengers' sake?  
Calm, undisturbed, grant them peaceful repose--  
Those men who died in their overclothes.*

*We would not take from the soldiers' graves  
Not even a blade of grass that waves,  
Nor would we ask you to hand us down  
A single star from a soldier's crown;  
All honor to these, but forget not those  
Who lived and died in their overclothes.*

*When the moon's cold ray grows dim and pale,  
And lightning leaps over glistening rail;  
When the sharp sleet pelts each eager face,  
As over the mountains and hills they chase;  
Dreary indeed are the battles of those  
Who fought and fell in their overclothes.*

*'Twould be sweet to know when we're laid to rest  
With our hands folded silently over our breast,  
That a woman comes to the grave once a year,  
Bringing wreaths of flowers and a falling tear,  
To dampen sadly the grave of those  
Who lived and died in their overclothes*

Anonymous

## MASONIC CEMETARY GRAVES

NAME	BORN	DIED	AGE	NOTES
Aragon, Santa Cruz	1877	1914	37	
Armstrong, Clara Alma	1897	1908	11	
Armstrong, David Harris	1886	1917	31	
Armstrong, Francis Caroline	1910	1911	1	
Atkinson, Clarence	1898	1906	8	Son of R.A. & J.E
Baca, Piedadd.	1936	1936	1	
Barreras, Damacia G.	1901	1977	76	
Barreras, Frank.	1890	1964	74	
Beck, Mary A.	1937	1998	61	
Bonem, Rena	1894	1906	12	Dau. of H. & May
Bowden, Ivan	1908	1909	1	son of G.F. & Alice
Bray, G.R.----				
Broyles, Floyd H	1889	1894	5	Son of J.W. & L.B
Broyles, Harold Eugene	1891	1892	1	
Broyles, James W.	1856	1923	67	
Chavez, Beatriz	1867	1914	47	
Chavez, Carpio	1845	1921	76	
Chavez, Rita	1886	1905	19	
Comer, Carl M.	1894	1907	13	
Crawford, May Cody	1882	1886	4	(Grave outside of fence)
Dan, Noah	1879	1945	66	
Darr, (?)-----				
Ely, Alvin Brewster	1859	1899	40	Son of George & Mary Ely
Evans, Henry	1853	1934	81	
Ewing, Raymond E.	1889	1892	3	son of W.L. & Ada M.
Gonzales, Amado C.	1907	1918	11	
González, Juan María V.	1851	1928	77	
Gordon, Fred G.	1883	1918	35	
Grandjean, Emil J.	1866	1924	58	
Grandjean, Jules A.	1858	1928	70	
Gray, Harry G.	1848	1895	46	
Hafley, Paul Lawrence	1903	1903	0	

## MASONIC CEMETARY GRAVES

NAME	BORN	DIED	AGE	NOTES
Hanna, David N.	1858	1928	70	
Hanna, Henry K.	1905	1945	40	Died during Flood?
Hanna, Gayle Jeannette	1923	1929	6	
Hanna, Joseph D.	1860	1908	48	
Hanna, Louis K.	1852	1916	64	son of Samuel G. & Minerva
Hanna, Mark Dewey	1898	1900	2	
Hanna, Minerva	1871	1932	61	
Hanna, Samuel G.	1856	1928	72	
Hanna, William J.	1849	1929	80	dau of Wm & A,
Hockett, Bertha	1894	1895	1	
Hockett, Edward	1828	1894	66	
Hockett, William	1851	1911	60	
Hodges, Lina Hockett	1883	1918	35	Son C.M. & A.A.
Hoss, Harold Ernest	1889	1893	4	b. Province of Ont. Canada
Howard, Henry Hammond	1862	1905	43	
Johnson, Alfro	1877	1906	28	
Kuhn, Henry Watson	1882	1892	9	
LaMasters, Elizabeth	1838	1911	73	Son of E.E. & I.M.
LaMasters, Elmer S.	1873	1897	25	
LaMasters, Isaac N	1837	1897	61	dau J.C. & M
LaMasters, Mary Frances	1895	1902	7	
Lyle, Alexanderd.	1837	1901	64	son of J. & M.
McGoldrick, Frankie	1885	1894	9	
McNiw, Mary	1833	1902	69	Co. E. 35 U.S.V. Inf.
Moore, Charles L.				
Natress, Elizabeth Crawford	1849	1923	74	
Natress, William	1849	1923	74	Infant dau. of L.&E.
Neal,	1901	1901	0	son of L.&C.
Neal, Willie	1868	1928	60	
Nilsen, Cecil	1892	1904	12	
Nilsen, Lauritz J.R.	1839	1906	67	
Nilsen, Nels	1868	1904	37	5/14/1868

## MASONIC CEMETARY GRAVES

NAME	BORN	DIED	AGE	NOTES
Nilsen, Sophie Carolina	1842	1920	78	
Ortega, Esmael	1867	1942	75	
Ortega, Manuelita	1879	1958	79	
Parker, Jessie G.	1866	1936	70	
Parrish, J.R.	1866	1897	31	F.G.Y.C. 1917
Ready, Mary A.	1867	1897	31	wife of F.C. Ready
Richards, Antoinette Moore	1849	1883	34	
Richards, Frederick A.	1842	1905	63	
Richards, Harvey M.	1873	1915	42	
Riegel, Carl	1860	1899	39	
Rogers, Rebecca Keziah	1824	1902	78	
Rosenberry, Clarence M.	1892	1893	1	Son of C.T. & M.E.
Rosenberry, Elijahd.	1838	1904	65	
Rouiller, August	1858	1913	55	
Rouiller, Georgie	1884	1888	4	
Rouiller, Johnnie	1861	1913	52	
Rouiller, Miguette	1893	1918	25	
Rouiller, Victor	1849	1880	31	
Russell, Frank	1854	1882	28	(Grave outside of fence)
Salome, Viola	1917	1918	1	
Sawin, John L.	1874	1895	21	b. Springfield, Mass (Grave outside of fence)
SeDillo, Franciscquita C.	1885	1936	51	
Silva, Nicholas	1856	1917	61	
Smith, Stephen	1867	1897	30	
Steen, Harry S.	1881	1946	65	
Sutherland, Robert MacDonell	1890	1898	8	Son of A.H. & F.V.
Trugillo, M.L.	1847	1913	67	
Trugillo, Pablo	1850	1914	64	Nacio 2 de Marso 1850; Murio de Guiliol 1914
Vaughn, Patrick Woods	1831	1903	71	Son of Singleton & Susan Cooper Vaughn
Walker, Donaldson	1864	1904	40	
West, Hector	1879	1906	27	
Westcott, Stephen	1832	1910	78	b. Butler, Wayne Co., N.Y.

## MASONIC CEMETARY GRAVES

NAME	BORN	DIED	AGE	NOTES
Williams, Pierce Henry	1902	1902	0	Son of D.A. & Lula
Wilson, Ann Pilling	1836	1919	83	wife of Francis
Wilson, Francis	1841	1923	82	
Wood, Horace H.	1900	1908	7	
Zimmerman, Cecilia,	1908	1910	2	



All that is left of a once vibrant town is now little more than a lonely sign beside the right-of-way.



